

**THE DEVELOPING PATTERN OF HORSE RACING IN YORKSHIRE 1700-1749: AN
ANALYSIS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PLACES**

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For Colin, Neil and Jude,
not forgetting Sam and Fabian

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ABSTRACT

by Iris Maud Middleton

on

The developing pattern of horse racing in Yorkshire 1700-1749: an analysis of the people and the places

This thesis seeks to examine the structure of horse racing in the early eighteenth century, with particular regard to the part it played in the Yorkshire leisure calendar. The subject is a largely untouched area of study, but by extensive use of contemporary material, it attempts to form a cohesive picture of the horse-racing scene during the period. The impact of parliamentary interference to curb the perceived effect on the working population and the provision of suitable animals for the military has been discussed, as has the organisation and funding of the races. The reasons for the timing of the meetings takes into account how the yearly racing calendar was organised relative to work and holiday times, as well as the significance of the days of the week. The length of the meetings and their integration with other leisure interests has been included to show that racing played a prominent part in the social and economic life of the times, and was controlled by the influence of various interested parties. Two chapters have been devoted to the owners and breeders of the horses, although only a minority can now be identified. From these statistics, maps have been compiled that indicate the local and national importance of Yorkshire racing. The methods of two breeders have been examined to show that some of their techniques were surprisingly enlightened for their day. Finally, the status of the identified owners is given consideration, and shows that although the aristocracy and gentry were well represented, it is likely that a wide spectrum of the population was involved, since the unidentified owners were more numerous and probably of a lower status.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>BJSH</u>	<u>British Journal of Sports History</u>
CQB	Calendar of Quarter Session Books
<u>CTB</u>	<u>Calendar of Treasury Books</u>
<u>CTBP</u>	<u>Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers</u>
DDCC	Documents of the Constable family of Burton Constable
DDCV	Documents deposited by Crust, Todd, & Mills
DDHO	Documents of the Hotham family of South Dalton
DDSY	Documents of the Sykes family of Sledmere
<u>DNB</u>	<u>Dictionary of National Biography</u>
EYLHS	East Yorkshire Local History Society
GC	Documents of the Gascoigne family
<u>GM</u>	<u>Gentlemans Magazine</u>
HCAO	Hull City Archive Office
HCL	Hull Central Library
HLSL	Hull Local Studies Library
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HUL	Hull University Library
<u>JHC</u>	<u>Journals of the House of Commons</u>
<u>JHL</u>	<u>Journals of the House of Lords</u>
LCRO	Leeds City Record Office
<u>LG</u>	<u>London Gazette</u>
<u>LM</u>	<u>Leeds Mercury</u>
NRRS	North Riding Record Society
NYCRO	North Yorkshire County Record Office
RMB	Richmond Manorial Books
SCL	Sheffield Central Library
WYAS	West Yorkshire Archive Service
<u>YAJ</u>	<u>Yorkshire Archaeological Journal</u>
YAS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society
YASRS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series
<u>YC</u>	<u>York Courant</u>

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INTRODUCTION

You heard how Gatherley Race was won,
What horses lost, what horses won,
And all things else that there was done
That day.

Now for a new race I shall you tell
Was neither run for a bowl or bell,
But for a great wager as it befell,
Men say.¹

The period studied in this thesis is the early eighteenth century, the time just before the Industrial Revolution and the large-scale enclosure of the common fields, events that were to permanently change the lives of many of the population who had lived in villages, and earned their living by some involvement in agriculture. Horses were a vital source of power at this time and were essential to agriculture, trade, travel, and military needs, when all but the poor would have owned, or had access to them. This ownership would have inevitably led to competition in the form of horse races. In the seventeenth century, during the Commonwealth, horse racing had been largely forbidden by law, partly to prevent men meeting to plot a revolution under the pretence of sport, but with the return of Charles II, race meetings were allowed to start up. Private matches for money, where two horses raced over a set distance to find the best, would always have been run, but the public race meetings, with refreshments and sideshows, returned only after the Restoration. It was at this time, during one of the periods when Parliament took an interest in horse racing, that the emerging pattern of English horse racing would develop and set the framework for the future. A detailed study of the way in which horse racing developed in one area, the ancient county of Yorkshire, is considered along with local and national issues, which affected that development. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive history of English horse racing for this period, and thus the Yorkshire situation cannot be put fully into the national context. To do this would have required the reading of every local newspaper for the period, and compiling detailed statistics for the whole of England, an impractical task, outside of the scope of this thesis.

Horse races took place in England and Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but information about these events is scarce and fragmentary. There appears, however, to be some similarity with the Yorkshire races of the early eighteenth century. The evidence suggests that these race meetings probably lasted for one or two days, and were sometimes held on religious holidays, when the horses carried stated weights for heats of three to five miles which

¹ A contemporary ballad on a meeting held on Gatherley Moor in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, from T.A. Cook, A history of the English turf (London 1901) Appendix

were run over common land.² These conditions imply that some form of race articles existed at this time, although the earliest list of articles found is the Newmarket set from 1665.³ Races were promoted by town corporations, tradesmen, or the gentry who provided prizes of cash, silver bells, or silver plate which sometimes had to be returned, to be awarded to the winner the following year, and in some cases the competitors had to give money for the next year's prize.⁴ There was little printed publicity given to the races until the provincial newspapers started up. In the early eighteenth century, horse racing was one of the few regularly organised sports, a fact that points to its importance in the evolution of the leisure industry. Fairfax Blakeborough described the eighteenth century racing scene as a widespread activity, in which every little market town, and many small villages, had unofficial and unregulated race meetings of sorts where the gentry raced their horses against one another for small prizes. He suggests that horse racing began in Yorkshire at the moment when there were two horses and two Yorkshiremen to compete, and that the involvement of the northern gentry who bred racehorses was vital to English horse racing.⁵

The ancient county of Yorkshire was the largest English county; it had always had a great sense of its own identity, and geographically and economically was representative of all types of English terrain and industry. It had a long seacoast and many different landscapes, ranging from barren hills and moors, through pastoral hillsides and arable fields, to marshlands. The area depended mainly on farming, as well as many kinds of industry, mining, and trade, and it was in north Yorkshire that the principal breeders had their stud farms. Yorkshire became arguably the most important county involved in English horse racing. The area around Newmarket, near Cambridge, was the place where London society went for high-stake race meetings, often under royal patronage, but few plebeian race events have been noted there, nor was East Anglia an area known for horse breeding. Much of the land, particularly in the North Riding is hilly, and the climate is unsuitable for arable farming, although the high rainfall supports good pasture where farmers reared cattle and horses, and it was at their local race meetings that the breeders tried out their horses. The people were mainly Protestant, but Catholicism was increasingly tolerated. Some Yorkshire race meetings became very prestigious, partly due to the presence of so many wealthy breeders living in the district. York's prominence as the social and administrative centre of the north of England, and the eagerness of the city council to encourage race meetings, led to the races there becoming second only to those at Newmarket.

² J.Fairfax Blakeborough, Northern turf history (London 1945) vol. 1 pp 169-173; vol. 2 pp 139-143; J. Gill, Racecourses of Great Britain (London 1975) pp 59, 66, 131

³ Race articles quoted in Cook p 106

⁴ Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 21; Gill pp 43, 59, 143; 59; Cook p 61

⁵ Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 10

In this era of poor roads, Yorkshire was far enough from London to have its own society, and entertainment facilities, yet sufficiently close to be controlled by central government. It has been said that the relationship between the mob and the gentry constituted the primary social relationship in eighteenth century England,⁶ and it is clear that race meetings were one of the occasions when there was a common leisure interest between these classes. This thesis will examine the influence that both classes had upon the development of horse racing in Yorkshire as a community event.

In this thesis, I shall examine the nature and significance of horse racing in Yorkshire during the early eighteenth century, and the identity, status and motives of those involved. Horse racing was a widespread and popular entertainment available to all classes of society, but to many people it had a particular financial relevance since it was connected to the economy of their district. Significant changes occurred over the period studied, and the national and local factors that were responsible for this will be examined. It will be shown that horse racing was affected by British politics and the British political system, by showing Parliament's concern with many aspects of horse racing, and the changes that it forced upon racing and the reasons for those changes. The period studied is the time before, during, and after the draconian Parliamentary legislation of 1740. Parliament's attitude to horse racing during the rest of the eighteenth century will be examined to investigate any further government intervention. The effects of the dynastic attacks of 1715 and 1745 upon the Hanoverian government's attitude towards horse racing will be discussed, together with Parliament's concern about public order. The method of organising race meetings by local rules, called articles, will be examined to show the features of racing that were open to abuse. It will be shown that race proprietors were able to take steps to prevent most types of cheating and to exercise control over the way that competitors and spectators spent their money, and the types of races that were run. Horse racing will be shown to be relevant to the trade and economy of some areas by an analysis of the methods of funding the prizes, so as to find which parties were involved, their reasons for doing so, and the way that the money was raised. The dates and days of the week when race meetings were held will be examined to find the significance of the timing in various places, and what effect the seasons, work, religious attitudes, or customs could have on a public entertainment like a race meeting. The race organisers will be shown to have taken into consideration the dates of other local race meetings when arranging their own event, so that there would be no competition for spectators or competitors, and that a regional calendar of racing was in operation in the early eighteenth century. Several factors could determine a town's ability to promote a successful race meeting including its size of population, status, communications, and the facilities that it could provide for race patrons. These factors will be explored to determine the relevance of several facilities to the length of meetings at various courses.

⁶ D.Hay & N.Rogers, Eighteenth century English society (Oxford 1997) p 33

It is clear that horse racing was an activity that was shared by people of all classes. The working people were as relevant as the rich and famous to a successful meeting; spectators and racehorse owners were drawn from many classes of society. The nature of, and reasons for people's participation, will be addressed. Where possible, the identity of the personalities involved in Yorkshire horse racing as owners, breeders, or jockeys, and the degree of their involvement in the sport will be discussed in order to find their motives for racing, and whether where they lived, their politics, or social and professional position, affected their interest in horse racing. The methods of two successful gentleman owners will be discussed to throw light on the way that horses were prepared for races, and the very limited amount of information about the jockeys will be presented to illustrate the almost anonymous status of that profession at this time.

The early eighteenth century has been chosen as the period to be studied because this was the earliest time that printed information about horse racing became readily available to the public. Before this date, most information would have been passed by word of mouth or private correspondence, but the racing calendars, and popular newspapers that evolved during this period provide a permanent source of data, much of which remains available to us today. The principal sources of information consulted will be contemporary racing calendars, books, and newspapers, as well as documents in the form of either published works, or the diaries and correspondence of people who lived in the early eighteenth century. It has not been possible to show the nature of horse racing before 1700 because very little verifiable information has been found, although newspapers, state papers, and private papers have been examined. The most important source of data on horse racing is to be found in the racing calendars. The first and only contemporary calendars in the early eighteenth century were compiled by John Cheny, and were published annually between 1727 and 1752. They give varying amounts of information about the races run at many English courses, and include the dates, the names and ages of the horses, the weights the horses carried, the number of heats run, the prize value, the names of the owners, and the order in which the runners came in. The Cheny calendars for five years have not been located. The information for the missing years has been taken from Weatherby's The racing calendar abridged, a useful compilation, but not contemporary, as it was published in 1829. It does, however, appear to be a slightly condensed copy of Cheny's annual volumes. Cheny's calendars are indexed according to owners' names and their horses, but unfortunately up to one in five of these entries is inaccurate, as the pages indicated do not match the text, which made tracing the places outside Yorkshire where Yorkshire owners raced, very difficult. John Orton published a comprehensive list of all the results of the York race meetings from 1709, together with some Hambleton and some Doncaster results in 1844, as Turf annals of York and Doncaster. Orton provides the same basic details as Cheny, but occasionally names some of the jockeys, and has several footnotes with extra information. None of the racing

calendars mentioned the results from the small courses where the prizes were less than £10, so there is far less information about the runners and owners in these places. The information on some of these small race meetings has been gleaned from local or provincial newspapers, namely the Leeds Mercury, and the York Courant. The Leeds newspaper has not survived very well, but issues for parts of several years i.e. 1721-1749 are available either on micro film, or in the publications of the Thoresby Society, and some details about the West Riding race meetings have been discovered by checking all of the issues of the Leeds Mercury between the dates mentioned. Usually, only the advertisements for forthcoming races were printed, showing the places, dates, prizes, and conditions of entry for many of their local races, which are not to be found elsewhere. The York Courant, which has survived better, but not completely, is available on micro film and has been scrutinised carefully for items relating to horse racing between 1728 and 1760, although many gaps are present. This widely read newspaper was used by several race organisers in much of Yorkshire and other parts of the north of England to advertise their meetings which appeared in a similar form to the Leeds' notices. None of the newspapers printed race results until almost the end of the period studied, but the sources of prize money were often stated. The London Gazette published notices to inform people about the arrangements for the early Royal Plate races sponsored by the Crown, and the issues from 1699 to 1721 have been examined. A very few race meetings not in the calendars or newspapers have been found in Prior's History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book, and Early records of the thoroughbred horse, as well as Fairfax Blakeborough's Northern turf history. Where a race meeting has been mentioned in two sources, the details have almost always been found to be identical, apart from the prize monies which were sometimes in pounds and sometimes in guineas. It is unlikely that every race meeting or racecourse has been located for every year, but certainly all of the meetings that offered prizes of £10 and above during the period of this survey, have been found. Some small village meetings will undoubtedly have taken place, but these were in all probability, casual and irregular meetings, where farmers and tradesmen raced their working horses for fun, rather than as true horse races. The days of the week when races were run was not always stated by Cheny, often only dates were given, and these days have been determined using the tables in Cheny's Handbook of dates for students of English history. The details on racecourses, dates, prize values and types of races run have been compiled to provide information to construct many of the tables used in this thesis. A gazetteer of all of the Yorkshire race meetings discovered during this survey has been produced from the above sources, and appears as Appendix 2. Contemporary comment will be used, where possible, to convey the essence and thoughts of early eighteenth century society.

There has been a great deal of confusion about the way that Parliament viewed and reacted to horse racing in the eighteenth century, and various authors have interpreted the reasons for, and results of, Parliament's actions. In order to clarify this, all of the proceedings, Bills and Acts printed in the Journals of the House of Commons, Journals of the House of Lords, Pickering's

Statutes at large, the House of Lord's Sessional papers, and the House of Commons Sessional papers have been meticulously searched for any occasion when horse racing was discussed in Parliament. Several contemporary books of the speeches in the debates in Parliament, and the comment in some newspapers and magazines have also been scrutinised to find evidence of any discussion on horse racing during the early eighteenth century. At certain times in this period, national security was in a perilous state with the threat of Jacobite risings, and public order presented enormous problems to the Hanoverian government. The start of the European war in 1739 served to increase the government's concern, and the actions taken by Parliament concerning the use of horses for racing, in the light of these events, will be examined. The requirements of the state, expressed in the Journals of the House of Commons in terms of horsepower, to maintain the Hanoverian regime, will be discussed. Contemporary observations on equine affairs from magazines and books on horses will be discussed. The possible activities of Jacobite plotters involved in racing will also be considered. Modern authors' views on the way that the upper classes viewed the English economy and the life styles and plight of many of the common people will be used to consider Parliament's motives and actions. The statutes that Parliament passed, state clearly the reasons for their tabulation and precisely what factors were to be affected, and the methods to be used in carrying out Parliament's orders. A full examination of the legislation that was actually relevant to horse racing throughout the eighteenth century will be made to find the features that could have troubled Parliament, including public order, the type of horses being bred and gambling. A survey of the types of horses that raced, and the frequency of race meetings, before and after legislation, will be examined to discover the effect of Parliament's intervention.

Original race articles (later published by Fairfax Blakeborough, Cook, and Prior) will be presented as evidence of the meticulous rules by which races were organised and run. The clauses in the articles will be used to show that race organisers legally empowered themselves with a very effective means of preventing, or minimising cheating. Further information on the rules, including the method of achieving the maximum return on the outlay for prizes, together with details of the sources of the prize money, can be found in some newspaper advertisements of races. The source of prize money and the reasons for the institution of the high prestige Royal Plate race prizes will be demonstrated using the information contained in the Calendars of Treasury books and papers, and the London Gazette. The reasons for, and the methods of financing other race prizes have been found in civic records, the papers of gentry families, some race articles, and a rare deed drawn up by the tradespeople and other inhabitants of Halifax, to ensure that a race meeting would be held there, clearly for the purpose of bringing money into the town. Profit could be made out of a popular entertainment and it will be shown that innkeepers in particular sponsored races, for which they were recompensed by stabling the racehorses. The articles for the Kiplingcotes race, which was a permanently endowed race, will be used to show the method by which this status was achieved. It will be shown that some race

prizes were donated in order to curry favour in parliamentary elections, whilst other donations were made out of goodwill. The eighteenth century York antiquarian, Francis Drake, has provided much insight and information about the reasons why the city of York was took active control of the local race meeting, and the relationship between the city and the leisure facilities it provided. The newspapers show that a system of taking back a proportion of prize money towards the prize for the following years was in operation at a few courses, which effectively reduced the prize. Complete sets of articles for every race meeting have not been located and probably most are no longer extant, but those articles that have been located, show such marked similarity, and common sense, that it is likely that almost identical articles were in use at all respectable courses.

The association between the days of the week and race meetings will be analysed, and histograms using information about race meetings will be used to demonstrate the varying popularity of these days, both before and after the 1740 Act, at the minor courses, and at the principal race meetings at York and Hambleton. The factors likely to have influenced the timing of race meetings, including the significance of religious customs and work patterns, together with the possible relationship of 'Saint Monday' to Yorkshire horse racing and leisure, will be discussed. It will be shown that Sundays were not used to walk the racehorses to the courses, as has been suggested. A change of popular days due to the demise of the smaller courses, caused by an Act of Parliament will also be shown.

An analysis has been made of the dates when races were held. The dates of the recognised holidays and religious festivals have been taken from Cheney's Handbook of dates for students of English history. Another histogram has been prepared to discover and illustrate any relationship between race meetings and traditional English religious holidays, by plotting the numbers of Yorkshire race meetings against the dates of the main Christian festivals. The association of races and various holidays found by this method demonstrates a continuation of ancient custom. Assize and Quarter Session dates found in the newspapers and published calendars of Quarter Sessions records will be compared with local race dates to determine the relationship between the gentry's civic duties and their leisure, particularly at York, Hambleton, and Kiplingcotes. The days and dates of fairs and markets in each place that had a race meeting, found in McCutcheon's Yorkshire fairs and markets to the end of the eighteenth century, which includes Owen's Fairs and markets, Leeds Mercury, York Courant, Langdale's Topographical dictionary of Yorkshire, and local history books will be compared with race dates. A table of the main holy days and fair dates will show the dependence of the races upon them, as well as which holy days were the most significant holidays. The effects upon racing of the seasonal variations of agricultural work and the weather will be discussed. The competition between the various race meetings for patrons or horses will be investigated by tabulating the

dates when races were held for two years, and finding the degree of coincidence in the dates to show the existence of a regional timetable for racing in the early eighteenth century.

The length of each Yorkshire race meeting has been calculated to indicate the relative importance of each racecourse, and hence the amount of horse racing that could be supported in each place. A histogram showing the numbers of meetings that lasted from one to more than six days will show the length and number of race meetings for both the minor, and the York and Hambleton meetings. The factors that could determine whether any place was able to promote a race meeting, and the length of any race meetings held will be discussed. A table has been prepared to show whether each place could support a long meeting, (which has been deemed to be three days or more) and the incidence of the features that were likely to influence the success of a race meeting in each place, including its population or hinterland, status, accommodation for visitors and their horses, road communications, and entertainment facilities. This section will confirm the findings of Borsay's work on the relationship between towns and racing.

The size of population has been taken from contemporary sources, including Archbishop Herring's Ecclesiastical Census; this did not have returns for all parts of Yorkshire, so the figures for the places not mentioned have been estimated from the Hearth Tax returns. The data derived from these sources is unlikely to be totally accurate, particularly as the Hearth Tax returns are from 1670-1673, well before the period being studied, but in the time before national censuses were made, these figures will give the best available estimate of population size. The region of Yorkshire that each place was in, its status as a county or market town, or ability to hold a fair will be shown to be reflected in the type of race meeting it sponsored. Data on fairs and markets has been found in McCutcheon's Yorkshire fairs and markets to the end of the eighteenth century, Langdale's Topographical directory of Yorkshire, newspapers and local history books. Information on the internal and national road network that served Yorkshire, has been found in the contemporary road atlases compiled by Ogilby, Moll, and Kitchin, which, with some of Defoe's observations on post roads, have been used to draw Map 1, to show the relationship of adequate road communications to the sites of horse races, even though the roads themselves will have been in very poor condition. The significance of bridges will be discussed. Ogilby's maps are in the form of narrow strips, and show certain main routes, whilst marking side roads, but the importance of the other routes is not indicated. The maps of Moll, and Kitchin are in a more standard form, and have been used to cover the areas left out by Ogilby. The reasons why some large centres of population that lacked good land communications were unable to hold race meetings will also be examined.

A wide range of entertainment facilities and refreshments that were arranged to coincide with race meetings will be discussed. These were mentioned in newspapers, correspondence,

Drake's Eboracum, local history books, and civic records. Drake recorded the active, indeed aggressive way, by which the York City Council developed the races, and the provision of other attractions by the gentry visitors, all of which can be seen to be mutually beneficial. Map 2, which has been taken from Rowntree's The history of Scarborough, illustrates some of the specialised facilities, and their locations at the spa town of Scarborough, where horse races were arranged on the beach, to encourage and entertain visitors for some years. Several factors could be relevant to attract spectators to attend a race meeting and then induce them to stay and while away some time there, including entertaining the men with cockfighting and the families with assemblies and walks. The provision of accommodation will be shown to be relevant to the attraction of out of town visitors to races. Data on the numbers of beds and stabling facilities has been taken from the War Office returns for 1686, which are the nearest figures available, and are unlikely to have changed significantly over fourteen years. Contemporary pictures and comment will be used to illustrate the quality and importance of various facilities in some places.

A race meeting could only be really successful if it received the support of racehorse owners, as well as the people who went there to be entertained. The men and women who owned the horses will, wherever possible, be identified; the places that they lived and their station in society or profession will also be discussed. Information on those found to be involved in racing has been compiled on a card index, in the possession of the author. This is too large to be included in this work, but contains diverse details of the 729 owners, as well as every named trainer and jockey mentioned in the racing calendars, newspapers, and printed parish registers, noting their horses, and meetings attended, and biographical information. Cheny's racing calendars and Pick's Stud Book have been the principal means of linking names with horses, and finding where they lived. Fairfax Blakeborough's and Prior's books have identified some others, but unfortunately, 534 owners out of a total of 729 found, remain simply names. The number of race meetings that each owner's horses attended has been calculated; this has been possible even for unidentified names, to find the degree of involvement that people had as owners. It has not been possible to say exactly how many owners were Yorkshire residents, but certainly the minimum number - 120, has been found, and the amount of support for local meetings will be discussed. Map 3 has been prepared to show the homes of the known Yorkshire racehorse owners, and the sites of the racecourses. Map 4 shows the residences of the non-Yorkshire owners to demonstrate the numbers of these owners, and the areas from which Yorkshire meetings received support.

The methods of two prominent breeders and trainers, found in their studbooks, will be discussed and compared; these have been published by Prior in Early records of the thoroughbred horse. Both breeders will be seen to value horses for their inherited characteristics and pedigrees, as well as their racing ability. Their methods of training horses, and fitness assessment will be

discussed, and it will be shown that some eighteenth-century trainers, including Cuthbert Routh, were using relatively modern methods of assessing a horse's fitness, by relating the ground conditions and jockey weights and experience, to the timing of secretly run performance trials. The times that some races were run in, and a contemporary horseman's manual will be used to show that horses ran at similar speeds to modern racehorses, which indicates that eighteenth century races were not necessarily run tactically as slow races, with a dash at the finish, as was described by Fairfax Blakeborough.

The racing calendars show that a few gentlemen rode as jockeys in races specifically for gentlemen, but the degree of involvement of the gentry in this aspect of racing is not clear, nor was it common in the early eighteenth century. Some Royal Plate races were stated to be specifically for gentleman riders, but unfortunately, as none of the jockeys were identified, it has not been possible to tell who rode. Information on the professional jockeys and trainers for the early eighteenth century is also scarce. Some of these men were occasionally mentioned e.g. by Cuthbert Routh in his studbook, and Orton's Annals of York and Doncaster named a few, but Cheny, the main source of race information, identified neither jockeys nor trainers. Evidence will be presented to show that the Yorkshire race organisers went so far as to 'warn off' specific people suspected of cheating, twenty five years before the date usually thought to be the first 'warning off.' The available data on jockeys will be used to demonstrate the casual nature of their employment, with no evidence found to suggest that in the early eighteenth century, any particular jockey rode mainly for one owner.

The status of the identified racehorse owners will be examined to find the type of people who were most active in this sport, and the possible reasons, other than a straightforward love of racing, for their participation. It has been found that few owners could be positively identified. The rich, titled and famous people are the ones identified, whereas the majority remain unknown, probably because they were none of the above, which strongly suggests that racehorse ownership was a widespread interest, and not confined to the gentry class. A great deal of biographical information about the identified people has been found in the lists of the peerage and the landed gentry, as well as Roebuck's hugely informative Yorkshire baronets. The lives and careers of the Parliamentarians have been very well documented by Sedgwick in The House of Commons, and the Dictionary of national biography has provided details about some other individuals. Lists of alumni of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge have been scrutinised for the names of the racehorse owners. Newspapers and local history books show lists of JPs, Assize Grand Jurors, and family status. The unusual participation of women as owners will be considered in conjunction with the activities of their male relatives. The number of Members of both of the Houses of Parliament who were involved in Yorkshire horse racing will be calculated to show the influence that some racehorse owners had on society. A few members of the House of Commons will be shown to have openly used horse racing as a

means of gaining popularity, and thus votes. The variation between party membership and racehorse ownership will be discussed. A possible meeting of Jacobite plotters amongst the crowds at York races in 1743 will be revealed to confirm Cromwell's suspicion in the previous century, that race meetings could be used as a rendezvous for Jacobites, and the parts played by racing personalities in the subsequent Jacobite invasion will be shown. The positions in public office and the Royal Household that were held by racehorse owners will be examined using Sedgwick, the Calendars of Treasury books and papers, private papers, and the lists of the peerage, to show their high standing and influence. The presence or absence of racing men found to be in various professions and religions will be discussed. The wealth of some owners, and its source, will be compared with the number of horses that some people kept, to show that land and trade subsidised racing, and some of the motives for owning racehorses will be considered.

This thesis will show the interdependence of horse racing and the many Yorkshire towns and villages where it took place during the eighteenth century, by examining contemporary evidence about the sites, the local and national economic and political factors, and the personalities involved.

CHAPTER 1

PARLIAMENTARY INTERVENTION IN HORSE RACING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Whereas the great number of horse races for small plates, prizes, or sums of money, have contributed very much to the encouragement of idleness, to the impoverishment of many of the meaner sort of the subjects of this kingdom, and the breed of strong and useful horses hath been much prejudiced thereby...¹

Introduction

Horses provided a major source of power before the Industrial Revolution; they were used in mining and industry as well as agriculture, and they were the only effective means of land transport for people and goods.² Horse power was vital to both domestic and military efficiency, but there appears to have been only one significant attempt by Parliament to increase the supply of horses during the eighteenth century, perhaps because there was never any real shortage. At various times from the mid-seventeenth century, both Parliament and the Crown had sought to promote the quality of horses produced.³ Several monarchs gave very valuable prizes for annual horse races in order to encourage breeders to produce strong, fast horses that could carry the weight of an average man.⁴ The Royal Stud, and many gentlemen, imported and bred top class horses for riding and racing.⁵ The exportation of English horses, which had been banned in Tudor times, was permitted, although taxed, from 1670.⁶ This allowed breeders a much wider market for their animals, and to some extent may have encouraged higher prices, and therefore more horses to be bred. Legislation was put before Parliament in 1715, 1740, 1745, 1759 and 1784 with various purposes in mind, but most of the bills were not really meant to improve or reform the sport of horse racing. Nor did Parliament at this time, seek to regulate or prevent betting on horse races, despite laws made to regulate gambling on games of chance. The government's main concerns were the distractions

¹ Preamble to 13 Geo II c19

² J. Tann, 'Horse power 1780-1880' in F.M.L.Thompson, ed. Horses in European economic history (Reading 1983) pp 21-30

³ Although Chivers wrote that: 'The British remained, as they always had been, sublimely indifferent to the importance of horses for national defence. Government did not assist or encourage breeders. Nor since 1565 had it ever imposed restrictions on them. It had ceased to control exportation in 1682, when duty became payable instead. Duty was abolished in 1809.' pp 32-33 in K.Chivers, 'The supply of horses in Great Britain in the nineteenth century' in F.M.L.Thompson, ed. Horses in European economic history (Reading 1983) pp 31-39, it is apparent that some efforts were made, particularly in encouraging breeders.

⁴ C.M. Prior, History of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book (London 1926) p 97. The Royal Plates were each worth 100 guineas and were awarded annually at courses throughout England; the conditions of entry were for specific ages and weights to be carried e.g. the Royal Plate usually run at Hambleton worth 100 guineas was for five-year-old mares to carry 10 stones, whilst the similar race at York was for six-year-old horses to carry 12 stones.

⁵ C.M.Prior, Early records of the thoroughbred horse (London 1924) pp 3-16

⁶ The exportation of horses was actually made legal in 1670 by the Act 22 Car II c 13 f8 when the duty was set at 5 shillings per head.

provided by horse racing to the poorer working people, and the quality of cavalry horses. A later factor was the raising of taxes on racehorses. Some of the proposals were rejected by Parliament and never became law. One section of the Act of 1740 was repealed five years later when it was seen to be unnecessary and unpopular with the racehorse owners, many of whom were represented in Parliament. The first eighteenth century legislation regarding horse racing was not, as has been stated, in 1711, but in 1715.⁷

1.1 The legislation proposed in 1715

The peace that came to England in 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht was marred by the great social discontent that followed it. The country was deeply in debt and the ending of the War of the Spanish Succession resulted in a severe economic slump that caused much unemployment and poverty when the demand for guns, ammunition and clothing for the army and navy stopped, and around 50,000 men were discharged from those services to add to the numbers of unemployed and paupers.⁸ The winter of 1714-1715 saw civil unrest, with mobs frequenting the streets of many towns, and great concern was felt by the new Hanoverian administration over the Jacobite sympathies of much of the population; these factors caused the 1715 Riot Act to be passed.⁹ The British government realised by July 1715 that its military establishment was by now inadequate to deal with a probable Jacobite uprising, and quickly issued orders for the raising of eight foot regiments and thirteen regiments of dragoons; the latter group had to be supplied from somewhere with several thousand mature, strong cavalry horses.¹⁰

It is certain that Parliament reacted to this situation by proposing a Bill for the improvement of the breed of horses, on 6 August 1715.¹¹ The Journal of the House of Commons contains no information about the contents of the Bill, or the reasons for its tabulation, but the records of the House of Lords show that there was an attempt to restrict the importation of horses under 14 1/2 hands, which would include many of the Arab and Barb horses, and to compel all horses in races to carry 12 stones in weight.¹² This Bill failed to enter the statutes, perhaps because by the time it could have been implemented, the crisis had passed, and the rebellion had been put

⁷9 Anne c 14. J.H.Plumb, The commercialisation of leisure in eighteenth century England (Reading 1974) p 17, wrote that Parliament tried to regulate horse racing in 1711 by the Act 9 Anne c 14, but this Act deals only with gambling on cards, dice, tables, tennis, bowls or other games, and does not even refer to betting on horse races, although it clearly specifies the other vehicles of gambling. It was made to protect people who mortgaged their property in order to gamble. If gambling on horse races had been intended by this Act, then it would certainly have been specified along with the rest.

⁸B. Lenman, The Jacobite risings in Britain 1689-1746 (London 1980) p 107

⁹J.H. Plumb, England in the eighteenth century 1714-1815 (London 1959) pp 53-55; C.Wilson, England's apprenticeship 1603-1763 (London 1979) p 290

¹⁰Regiments had no fixed numbers of soldiers, but each one would probably have several hundred men. Lenman p 105

¹¹JHC vol. 18 p 259 on 6 Aug 1715

¹²D.J.Johnson, ed., The manuscripts of the House of Lords (London 1977) vol. 11 pp 233-235

down. However, it emphasised Yorkshire's importance as a centre of horse breeding as the MPs for the county were specifically and collectively appointed, with others, to serve on the committee that was to examine the Bill. The Commons passed the Bill through all its stages, but rejected a clause that would have allowed young horses to run in races. It is unclear what was intended by this clause, as it had never been illegal to race young horses, but it is likely that those Members with vested interests in horse racing were attempting to amend the Bill to reduce the weights to be carried by young horses. At the end of August, the Bill was referred to the House of Lords, but their lordships did not return it, and it failed.¹³ By 1718 there was still concern about the adequate provision of good horses for the troops guarding the king on a proposed visit to England and Scotland,¹⁴ however, Defoe noted in the early 1720s that following the War of the Spanish Succession the numerous horse breeders around the Yorkshire/ Durham border had started to produce a different type of horse specifically for cavalry officers. The new breed, which Defoe called chargers, was larger and much sturdier than the racehorses and hunters previously raised there; it was still a fast animal, but more suited to hunting and travelling than racing.¹⁵ The northern breeders had thus followed Parliament's wishes and taken advantage of the commercial opportunity that was presented to them by breeding the particular horses that Parliament had tried to legislate for, and were by now producing chargers for those who could afford them.

1.2 The legislation of 1740

Parliament showed little interest in horse breeding or racing after 1715 for 25 years. During most of the period following the 1715 rebellion until the 1730s, Britain had relatively low food prices and good employment prospects so there was little plebeian disaffection.¹⁶ The formation of alliances between Britain and the major European powers resulted in peace abroad, and Britain settled down to a period of prosperity, but by 1738 Britain had become diplomatically isolated, and in 1739, war became inevitable.¹⁷ A contemporary view was that Parliament reacted to the growing complaints from employers and the better off by seeking to restrict the more idle means of recreation of the common people.¹⁸ In early 1740, the government demonstrated its concern about the undesirable effects of horse racing by bringing

¹³J.H.C. vol. 18 pp 259, 280, 283, 286 on 6,19, 22, 25, 27 Aug 1715. Young horses, under five years of age should only race if allowed to carry light weights. If a heavy weight must be carried, then only mature horses can race, and this means keeping a horse until it is five or six years old before racing it, and finding that it might then be useless. If younger horses could race, then less time and money might be wasted on unsuitable animals. W.Vamplew, The turf (Allen Lane London 1976) p 24; T.Wallis, The farrier's and horseman's complete dictionary (London 1759) np section Horse racing

¹⁴F.H.Blackburne Daniell, ed., Calendar of the Stuart papers belonging to His Majesty the King preserved at Windsor Castle HMC (London 1916) vol. 6 p 259

¹⁵D.Defoe, A tour throughout the whole island of Great Britain ed P.Rogers (London 1986) p 515

¹⁶R.Porter, English society in the eighteenth century (London 1990) p 111

¹⁷C.Cook & J.Stevenson, The Longman handbook of British history (London 1996) p 6; Plumb England pp 69-71

¹⁸J.Almon, The debates and proceedings of the British House of Commons London 1742-1744) p 29

in an Act to regulate certain of its aspects, particularly what was described as 'the excessive increase of horse races'.¹⁹ It was said that the ease with which race meetings were held, greatly encouraged the idleness that resulted in the impoverishment of the poorer people of the country, and also that the breeding of strong and useful horses was being prejudiced - an attempt to force breeders to produce heavy horses suitable for cavalry purposes. Another section of the same Act dealt with certain aspects of gaming with dice and cards, but this section appears to be unconnected with horse racing, except that both were regular features of many fairs and holiday events supported by the working classes. It may have been simply a convenient slot in which to fit an amendment to an Act passed in the previous session of Parliament, which gamblers had circumvented by inventing new games of chance, not specifically forbidden by that Act.²⁰ During the eighteenth century Parliament did not attempt to interfere with gambling on horse races which was usually an ad hoc, private arrangement, perhaps because as section 6.3 shows, many politicians were racehorse owners and gamblers.²¹ One of the MPs appointed to prepare the Bill was the Secretary of State for War, which confirms that the breeding of suitable cavalry horses was again a major source of anxiety to the government.²²

Parliament acted in support of the opinion that was expressed throughout the eighteenth century that the lack of industry amongst some of the working people of England should be addressed. It was the accepted practice, particularly in the spinning, weaving and metal-working trades, for work to be 'put out,' which meant that manufacturers gave materials for processing to tradesmen who worked at home, on the days and hours that they chose. The workers were paid by the piece, and it is said, would usually work only to pay for their immediate needs of rent and food, and, as employers had little capital outlay, they had no cause for complaint. It was felt by some that wages were too high if people could afford to live adequately on the income from less than six days work, and it had become the practice of many trades not to work on Mondays, and even Tuesdays as well. The loss of working time

¹⁹ 13 Geo II c 19 f3. The published accounts of debates in Parliament contain no references to the speeches in the debates on horse racing. viz: R.Chandler, ed. The history and proceedings of the House of Commons from the Restoration to the present time (London 1742-1744); J.Almon, The debates and proceedings of the British House of Commons (London 1742-1774); J.Debrett, ed. The Parliamentary register or the history of the proceedings of the House of Commons: containing an account of the most interesting speeches and motions etc. (London 1780-1796); W.Cobbett, Cobbett's Parliamentary debates, (London 1812) J.Tor buck, ed. A collection of the Parliamentary debates in England from MDCLXVIII to the present time (London 1741). There has been much confusion about the legislation of horse racing e.g. W.E.H. Lecky, The history of England in the eighteenth century (London 1890) vol. 2 p 293, wrote that prize value was set at £20 from 1740, and that even spectators would be fined five shillings for attending an illegal race.

²⁰ 12 George II c 28

²¹ Parliament had legislated against gambling on horse racing in 1664 when it was concerned with the nobility and gentry losing estates and fortunes; horse racing was specifically named in this statute. At that time it was made illegal a) to win anything by cheating, or b) to bet more than £100, except as cash, and any debts so created were not recoverable and the winner was liable to forfeit the winnings plus treble the value. However it is not known whether this law was ever enforced. 16 Car II c 7 f2-3

²² JHC vol. 23 p 449 7 Feb 1740

caused by the custom of 'Saint Monday', with the traditional Whitsun, Easter and other religious festivals and the statutory annual fairs, was made worse by the carnival-style events including horse races which sometimes took place on these days, and encouraged people to waste money.²³ The working people must have attended the races in great numbers, and whilst enjoying themselves, behaved in a manner that outraged many of the upper classes. The government could do nothing to prevent holidays and the usual activities at fairs and feasts, but they could intervene in an organised event like a horse race, where the drinking of alcohol by the spectators was actively encouraged by the promoters as part of the means of getting profit, possibly to help finance the prizes, and the crowds drawn to watch the races were induced to gamble on dice and other games of chance. The presence of large numbers of people gave thieves and pickpockets easy opportunities to follow their trades as well.²⁴ The timing of the Act may have been influenced by economic factors. Ten years of agricultural depression had resulted in widespread unpaid rents, the effect of which was felt not only as a loss of income to landowners, but they were in many cases, having also to pay their tenants' poor rates. These had increased in 1739-40 due to the hard winter and high food prices. The major landowners had total control over Parliament, and they may have fuelled the government's determination to take steps against people's improvidence.²⁵ The disorder, profligacy and extravagance of the common people had caused their leaders in Parliament much concern throughout the century.²⁶ The recent growth of provincial weekly newspapers that reported and advertised horse races, and Cheny's annual publication of racing results, may have brought the magnitude and extent of the racing industry to the attention of the government.

Parliament's other concerns were with national security and maintaining Britain's overseas trade. The position of head of state had been disputed or fought over for much of the previous hundred years, with much interference from foreign powers with their own interests, and trade with the colonies was a great and increasing source of wealth to British industry and shipping. A strong military force was the only means of maintaining what had been achieved over the years, and on land, whether at home or abroad, horses were a vital commodity in providing the means of waging war. The quality and supply of horses for the army had, for some years, troubled the government. By 1739 war had been declared on Spain, and British relations with much of the rest of Europe, particularly with France, were precarious; it would have suited the

²³ J.Rule, Albion's people: English society 1714-1815 (London 1992) pp 2-4, 19-20; D.A.Reid, 'The decline of Saint Monday 1766-1876', Past and Present vol. 71 (1976) pp 76-101; D.Brailsford, Sport, time, and society. The British at play (London 1991) p 49

²⁴ YC 13 Feb 1739; R.W.Malcolmson, Popular recreations in English society 1700-1850 (Cambridge 1973) pp 76-77; A.Everitt, Landscape and community in England (London 1985) p 163

²⁵ Rule p 196; Wilson pp 244-245

²⁶ Almon p 29

French to have a Jacobite rising in Britain, and in these circumstances a potent British cavalry was a great priority. Parliament voted to raise the number of men in the army from 26,896 in 1739 to 40,859 in 1740 which would mean a substantial increase in the quantity of horses required.²⁷ If there was a shortage of horses for the army, then the defence of Britain, and British commercial interests would be seriously threatened. Parliament cleverly did not actually ban any horse races, because this could have been seen as direct interference in local leisure affairs, and some racing was essential to promote horse-breeding. Instead, the onus was put upon the race organisers and horse owners to pay £50 prizes, or not to hold the races. It was for these reasons that the Bill was ordered on 7 February 1740, and came into effect on 24 June 1740.²⁸

The 1740 Act stated that:

- a. No prize was to be less than £50 in value, except for existing races endowed by gifts or annual sums of interest.
- b. Five-year-old horses must carry 10 stones weight
Six-year-old horses must carry 11 stones weight
Seven-year-old (aged) horses must carry 12 stones weight
- c. Horses were to be entered only by their owners
Only one horse per owner was to be entered in any race
- d. The entrance money was to be paid as a prize to the second best horse
- e. All races were to be completed in one day
- f. Matches were to be run only at Newmarket or Black Hambleton

a. The most significant part of the Act was the new minimum prize value set at £50. This effectively stopped all small race meetings, as few race organisers were able to raise enough prize money to fulfil that condition. The number of race meetings, and race days for the full year preceding, and the full year following the Act are shown in Table 1 below and illustrate the enormous impact of the Act on the amount of horse racing that was subsequently organised.²⁹

²⁷C.Cook & J.Stevenson eds., British historical facts 1688-1760 (London 1988) pp 170-171

²⁸ C.G.Robertson, England under the Hanoverians (London 1911 reprinted 1962) pp 80-85; JHC vol. 23 pp 449, 505, on 7 Feb, 21 Mar 1740; JHL vol 25 pp 481-482 on 13, 14 Mar 1740

²⁹B. Campbell, Horse racing in Britain (London 1977) p 143 wrote that Parliament tried to control racing by this Act, but that it had little effect on racing, and was impossible to enforce. The value of prizes before the 1740 Act is said by Campbell p 211, to have been limited to £10 by the statute 9 Anne c 14, but this Act makes no reference to horse-racing prizes. Many authors repeat the story of a particular race, which is said to have been run at various times, c. 1703-1710, between a horse owned either by Sir William Strickland or Sir Matthew Pierson of Yorkshire, and Tregonwell Frampton, the royal trainer, in which unprecedented gambling losses were made by the gentlemen of southern England. D.Craig, Horse-racing (London 1982) p 162; Vamplew The turf pp 199-200. The result of this gambling loss is said to be the above Act, which limited gambling debts to £10, but in this case, if horse racing losses were intended to be curbed, then the statute would surely have clearly stated 'horse racing' debts, but it does not mention horse racing although it specifically names dice, tables or other games. There appears to be no contemporary evidence about this race, although it probably did take place. The long delay between the race and the Act would also suggest no connections.

TABLE 1

TOTALS OF DAYS, PLACES AND PRIZE MONEY OF HORSE RACING REPORTED
DURING 1739 AND 1741 IN YORKSHIRE³⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Places</u>	<u>Value</u>
1739	56	22	£1156
1741	12	6	£ 666

The number of English horse races reported by Cheny fell from 361 in 1739 to 120 in 1741. It is surprising that Cheny did not mention the reason for this huge change; perhaps it was so obvious as to be unnecessary to his anticipated readership.³¹ Table 1 shows that in Yorkshire, 22 places were reported to have held races in 1739, but in 1741, only 6 race meetings have been found. The total number of days when racing is known to have taken place in Yorkshire was 56 in 1739, compared with only 12 in 1741. The subsequent reduction in total prize money was, however, less marked: £1156 was won in Yorkshire in 1739, falling to £666 in 1741. This result correlates with the demise of the meetings offering only small prizes. The largest prizes in both years were the two Royal Plates, paid for by the Crown, and worth 100 guineas each. These of course were unaffected by the Act, and made up almost one third of the 1741 total prize fund. 53 races had prizes of less than £50 and these had to cease or be revalued. Only the two Royal Plates i.e. Hambleton and York, and one other race at York, worth £60, with the annual Kiplingcotes race, an endowed race worth only 16 guineas, but specifically exempted in the legislation, could remain on the racing calendar. In 1741, the year following the Act, the race organisers at four places, i.e. Doncaster, Malton, Wakefield, and York, managed to raise the individual value of their prizes to £50 by amalgamating smaller prizes to make one larger one, but this reduced the number of races and days when races were held.³² Beverley held races in 1742 that complied with the law, but no races have been noted there for 1741.³³

The above places managed to continue their race meetings when others were forced to be abandoned because of their traditional functions as social and administrative centres. At York

³⁰J.Cheny, An historical list of all the horse matches run and all the plates and prizes run for in England and Wales (of a value of ten pounds and upwards) (annual volumes 1727-1752). Many races, including those worth less than £10 were not reported by Cheny, which makes statistics taken from this source alone unreliable. Notices of races in Yorkshire newspapers have been added here. Borsay states that the number of racecourses rose from 112 to 138 between 1727 and 1739, using only Cheny's reports, however, it is likely that the absence of many Yorkshire events from Cheny's calendar was repeated countrywide. P.Borsay, 'Town and turf: the development of racing in England c.1680-1760' in Life in the Georgian town (Georgian Group Annual Symposium 1985) pp 53-60. The figures for all England have not been computed in this survey as the task of checking all local newspapers for race meetings could not be undertaken.

³¹Prior Calendar p 112. The number of meetings held in 1740 is probably less relevant as the dates when annual races were held were not always on the same date every year and races may have been held early to circumvent the Act which came into force in the middle of the racing season.

³²Cheny 1741

³³Cheny 1741, 1742

and Hambleton the Royal Plates were responsible for one day of racing at each place, and matches were specifically allowed at the latter, but York probably survived as the most important race meeting in Yorkshire due to its great status as the main social, administrative, and judicial centre of the north of England. The gentry gathered at York for the social events that accompanied the assize week. One of these attractions was the race meeting, and as the town depended heavily on visitors for much of its trade and employment, money was raised by the tradesmen to provide prizes.³⁴ Wakefield and Beverley were regional centres of administration for the West and East Ridings respectively and had for many years attracted visitors for meetings of Quarter Sessions and associated business.³⁵ Doncaster was the social centre for the gentry of south Yorkshire, whilst Malton was a meeting place of a lesser status, perhaps due to its remoteness, for the North Riding gentry.³⁶ All of these places were old established centres that relied economically on providing services and entertainment for visitors.

b. The types of races that could be held were defined precisely by the new law. All horses were to carry weights strictly according to age, so that the earlier freedom of race organisers to set their own standards of weights was removed. This law ended the popular galloway races in which horses carried weights according to their height or sometimes a combination of age and height. These races allowed horses of different ages and heights to compete against one another, and where there was a scarcity of racehorses this system provided a competition for the horse owners and a day of entertainment, when otherwise insufficient entries would be available to run a race for one category such as five-year-olds. By handicapping the larger horses it was made possible for smaller horses to compete successfully against them, thus providing some entertainment, with added interest for the gamblers. In 1740 the weights to be carried by horses were laid down specifically and were set to favour larger horses. This would have discouraged owners of smaller horses that could not compete well whilst carrying heavy weights from entering, thus reducing the number of runners which in turn meant less entry fees, resulting in lower prize money and perhaps the winding-up of the meeting.

Table 2 illustrates the drastic change in the types of races that were held in Yorkshire following the 1740 legislation. In 1739, the most popular events had been for galloways, or races that handicapped horses by their height. By 1741, these events had disappeared temporarily from

³⁴P.Borsay, The English urban renaissance: culture and society in the provincial town 1660-1770 (Oxford 1989) p 30

³⁵K.A.MacMahon, Beverley (Clapham 1973) p 58; S.H.Waters, Wakefield in the seventeenth century from 1550-1710 (Wakefield 1933) pp 12-17

³⁶Borsay Town and Turf p 55; C.Fiennes, The illustrated journeys of Celia Fiennes c1682-1712 ed. C.Morris (London 1982) p 102

Yorkshire racing.³⁷ Two types of horse had probably raced as galloways, i.e. those less than 14 hands high, and so rather small to race against some of the larger racehorses, and those of unknown age. In order to enter a race designated for a specific age of horse it was necessary to show proof of the horse's age, with a certificate from the breeder. If, as was often the case, the horse's derivation was uncertain, then the only races that could be entered were galloway events, or those for aged horses where no certificate was required, and in these a good, although immature horse would be at great disadvantage racing against good seven year olds.

TABLE 2

THE CLASSIFICATION OF RACES HELD IN YORKSHIRE IN 1739 AND 1741

(where race classes were reported from results in Cheny and newspapers)

<u>Classification of races</u>	<u>1739</u>	<u>1741</u>
Galloway/ weight for inches	22	0
Hunters weight specified 10-12 stones	6	0
4 years old	2	0
4 and 5 years old	3	1
5 years old	5	2
5 or 6 years old	0	1
6 years old	5	2
Aged	1	1
Weight carried only, 10 stones	6	1
Weight carried only, 11 stones	1	0
Weight carried only, 12 stones	0	2
Mares, 5 years old, carrying 10 stones	1	1
Matches	3	0

It had probably been necessary to allow horses of various ages and sizes to enter the same race in order to attract enough competitors to make up the numbers needed for an event, particularly at a small meeting. If a race was for one category of horse only, then the race might have to be abandoned for want of horses, so the ability to enter any horse could mean the continuance of an event, but not much of a test of the horses concerned.

In the first complete year that the 1740 Act was in force, the types of race most often run in Yorkshire were those for four to six-year-old horses and horses carrying 12 stones as specified

³⁷The term 'galloway' was not defined during the eighteenth century. It may be connected with the present day pony, derived from the Scottish area of the same name, but there is no information on this point, and it has been suggested that the old galloway became extinct as a breed in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was widely known from Tudor to Victorian times. A.F.Fraser, The native horses of Scotland (Edinburgh 1987) p 159

by the Act. This weight acted as a blanket cover for all ages. The new law ignored four-year-olds and hunters, and this omission may have left race organisers unsure as to where they stood over these groups as there may have been doubt about the weight they should carry, or indeed whether it was legal to allow four-year-olds to race at all.³⁸ In 1741, the only race held for four-year-olds in Yorkshire was at Malton and it was also open to five-year-olds.³⁹ There were no races reported for designated hunters. Hunters' races had usually been for gentlemen riders at a specified weight, so that the age of the horse was never taken into account, although the horse was supposed to be a genuine, current hunter.⁴⁰ There appears to be no legal reason for winding up hunters' races as the 1740 Act would have made hunters carry weight for age, and as many would either be of uncertain age, or over seven years old, then they would have had to carry 12 stones, which was the commonly stated weight for hunters' races before 1740. The likely reason for the temporary demise of hunters' races is that they were often held at the less important race meetings like Gatherley Moor, which did not survive the 1740 Act.

Under the 1740 legislation, Parliament deliberately took away the concession previously given to smaller sized horses in races by increasing and standardising by age, the weight that each horse was made to carry. Mature horses of seven years or more were usually stronger and able to carry more weight than younger horses, but size was also a factor in determining the weight that a horse could successfully carry in a race.⁴¹ Small horses of the same age as larger ones would probably be at a serious disadvantage when made to carry the same weight. In 1739, there were five races in Yorkshire specifically for five-year-old horses, and in four of these, the horses were allowed to carry up to one stone less than the ten stones required by the 1740 Act. Six-year-old horses were specified for five events in 1739, and in four of these, were allowed to carry ten stones; in the other race twelve stones was specified. The only race for aged horses [more than seven years old] in 1739 specified eleven stones weight to be carried, i.e. one stone less than Parliament was to insist upon the following year. Races where any horse could enter so long as they carried the specified weight would have allowed some advantage to seven-year-olds, or to larger, younger horses, as the weight to be carried was a standard ten stones in six races and eleven stones in one race. Thus the new Act's requirement that seven year olds must always carry twelve stones took away the weight allowance which had previously been given to smaller horses in this age group. The ending of galloway, or weight for height races, meant that smaller horses of any age would be far less

³⁸Prior Calendar p 114 states that horses less than five years old were not deemed racehorses for the purpose of the 1740 Act. In fact, the statute does not mention horses less than five years old.

³⁹Cheny 1741

⁴⁰At this time horses were not normally classed as hunters until five years of age and were usually at their prime aged six. S.Sidney, The book of the horse (London 1893) p 425

⁴¹T.Wallis, The farmer's and horseman's complete dictionary (London 1759) np section Horse racing, stated that racehorses should be at least six years old as no horse under that age has sufficient strength to run a six mile course without running the hazard of being over strained.

likely to win races following the 1740 Act. This legislation was meant to discourage breeders from breeding, and prospective purchasers from buying horses that were not capable of carrying an average man's weight at speed. The law would enable the horse that could best carry a man's weight at speed to win, irrespective of size. This was a fair test of a working horse's ability, but it was not a good test of a racehorse, which is judged on its speed and stamina, as its heavy load bearing capability was a much less important factor and one that would become less relevant in the future.⁴² The unstable political situation meant that war was imminent and called for a ready supply of horses for the army. The government wanted to force, if they could not encourage, breeders to produce animals strong enough to carry cavalymen and their equipment, rather than racehorses. The Royal Plate races that had been instituted and paid for by the Crown for some years were designed to encourage the production of horses that could carry normal men's weights. These were for five and six-year-old horses, usually carrying ten or twelve stones, and were held at various sites across England for the very valuable prize of 100 guineas.

c. The part of the Act that dealt with the entry of only one horse per owner in any race may have been to prevent sharp practice. The racing calendars rarely indicate that one person entered more than one horse per race, but of course, if entries were made under an assumed name, then this would not be obvious today, although the racegoers of the eighteenth century may have had their suspicions. If there were insufficient genuine entries for a race, usually at least three were necessary, then the race was cancelled.⁴³ An unscrupulous person who found that his was the only entry could enter two more of his own, and be sure of winning and making a profit, regardless of the spirit of the races. The conditions of entry at some race meetings, and those that were run under the Royal Articles already excluded multiple entries, but entering more than one horse per race was now made specifically punishable by law.⁴⁴ It is more likely that Parliament could foresee the circumstances in which a sham race might have been put on by a race organiser who set up a race between his own horses, in order to attract working people to the drinking and side-shows that accompanied races. In this case he would keep the prize of £50 and still have the small race meeting that the Act had forbidden.

d. Payment of the entry fees to the second best horse was made compulsory in 1740. This type of runner-up prize had been regularly given in Yorkshire races before the 1740 Act, but it

⁴²Gilbey wrote that the 1740 Act was to suppress racing by ponies or other small weak horses, as well as controlling the lower classes, and implies that this was for the good of the racing industry, when actually the racing of large work-horses would not be exciting or unpredictable nor attract people to watch or invest their money in. W.Gilbey, Thoroughbred and other ponies with remarks on the height of racehorses since 1700 (London 1903) p 29

⁴³E.g. YC 13 Mar 1740 (Malton). In this case it would cost six guineas to enter three horses for a race and if these were the only entries the owner would win £20 with no other expenses, if an inhabitant of the race town and thus did not need to pay for stabling fees.

⁴⁴YC 19 Oct 1729 (Sunderland races), 9 Jun 1730 (Knaresborough); Prior Calendar p 109

is likely that some places did not previously make this award. The articles for the Kiplingcotes race, c. 1669, show that the second horse received the stakes, and newspaper advertisements for several Yorkshire races show that this prize was given before the new legislation.⁴⁵ This part of the Act was included to prevent race organisers from using the entry fees to increase the winner's prize to £50, to the detriment of the second horse's prize. The object of the 1740 law was to prevent as many small race meetings as possible, and so Parliament put all possible obstacles before the race organisers.

e. The law specified that all races had to be completed in one day. This could have been an attempt to prevent possible fraud by the substitution of horses between heats overnight, and was also a better test of a horse's stamina if no overnight rest was allowed, but it is more likely to have been a measure to prevent race organisers from holding numerous heats for one race over a period of several days for one prize of £50. Without this clause, the whole part of the Act that was designed to eliminate the small prize races would have been rendered ineffectual.

f. Finally, Parliament ensured that a race meeting could not be disguised as a match between several competitors. It would have been fairly easy to set up a race meeting under the guise of matches between specific gentlemen, and keep some small meetings going, but the fact that matches were to be restricted to Newmarket, or Black Hambleton, where some supervision could be ensured, meant that gentlemen could still have some matches, but the events would not be widespread enough to distract the lower classes from their labours. Parliament specifically amended the name 'Newmarket' in the Act to 'Newmarket Heath' in the 'Counties of Cambridge and Suffolk', in order to exclude any other existing or newly named Newmarkets from holding matches.⁴⁶

The government had learned that people would find ways around laws unless the legislation was made watertight. The Act made in 1739 to prevent gambling on games of chance had been nullified by the invention of new games, and this forced Parliament to make additions to that law in 1740. Parliament did this at the same time that it made the law to prevent horse races, and having learned its lesson in 1739, endeavoured to leave no loopholes that would allow races to be run except in the manner prescribed by the law.

The 1740 Act displeased some of the gentlemen of the North Riding, who with their tenants bred sporting horses, and they presented a petition to Parliament on 16 January 1741, in which they stated that the proposed law would lead to the extinction of horse racing, which would in

⁴⁵Appendix 1; Prior, Early records p 165; YC 22 Sep 1730 (Otley), 4 Apr 1738 (Doncaster), 7 Aug 1739 (Pontefract)

⁴⁶JHC vol. 23 p 496 on 11 Mar 1740. Eleven places called Newmarket have been found in England and Wales in J.Bartholemew, Gazetteer of the British Isles (Edinburgh 1943) and two Hambletons in Yorkshire.

turn ruin the breeding of riding or saddle horses, which are best judged and tested by racing.⁴⁷ They were concerned that without this test of speed and stamina, the present bloodlines would be neglected, and thus the breed would be weakened. The petitioners proposed that the lower limit of prize money should be changed to £40, and the weights proscribed in 1740 to be decreased and they requested leave to allow a Bill to amend the 1740 Act to be introduced, but permission was refused.⁴⁸ Cheny supported the petitioners' view that the weights were too heavy, in his 1742 calendar, and suggested that a different handicapping system should be devised.⁴⁹

1.3 The legislation of 1745

In 1745 Parliament repealed part of the 1740 Act as it must have been apparent to the government by this time that there was no need for concern about the supply of cavalry horses for the army, and that the problem associated with horse races was public order and idleness. The army had been able to replace, easily and cheaply, the 331 horses killed at the battle of Dettingen in 1743. In fact there must have been a plentiful supply of horses in England because subsequently, between 1745 and 1746, more than 1,200 horses lost in campaigns in Britain and Flanders were replaced, and as horses were not considered mature enough for this kind of work until they were five years old, then most of these horses would have been born before the 1740 Act which had sought to encourage the breeding of 'useful horses'.⁵⁰

The 1745 Bill stated that:

the thirteen Royal Plates of one hundred guineas each, annually run for, as also the high prizes that are constantly given for horses of strength and size, are sufficient to encourage breeders to raise their cattle to the utmost size and strength possible...⁵¹

It became lawful from 24 June 1745 to run any race or match at any place, and at any weight, as long as the prize was not less than £50. This Act was a good compromise; the numerous small race meetings whose influence had caused Parliament to pass the 1740 Act, had been successfully disbanded because the promoters had been unable to raise the prize value, but

⁴⁷The North Riding was greatly involved with light horse breeding. Defoe wrote in the early 1720s that the North Riding was 'the place noted in the north of England for... the finest galloping horses, I mean swift horses, horses bred, as we call it, for the light saddle, that is to say, for the race, the chace, for running or hunting...' Defoe p 511

⁴⁸JHC vol. 23 p 595 on 16 Jan 1741

⁴⁹Prior Calendar p 115

⁵⁰ The horses lost at Dettingen in 1743 were replaced @ £15 to £20 each, total £5,460; 855 horses lost at Fontenoy and Melle in 1745 were replaced for £15,360; 408 horses lost at Falkirk and Culloden were replaced for £6,120. Horseguard's horses cost £20 each but dragoon's horses were only £15 each. Horses were also purchased for the Dutch troop for £2,632 but no number was quoted (perhaps around 150) J.H.C. vol. 24 p 613 on 13 Mar 1744, vol. 25 pp 136, 272 on 25 Apr 1746, 4 Feb 1747

⁵¹ 18 George II c 35 f11

that legislation had gone too far in setting the heavy weights for the horses to carry. Parliament had not sought to take control over racing, indeed it handed the initiative back to the horse breeding and racing gentlemen who were now able to organise the types and venues of races to suit themselves, as long as the race meetings were of sufficient status to offer large prizes.⁵² It was the monetary factor alone that restricted the number and frequency of race meetings. The number of race meetings reported in Yorkshire remained static at seven between 1742 and 1744, showing that the numerous meetings that had been dependent on small value prizes had indeed been abandoned.⁵³ It took some time for the law of 1745 to show any effect on the number of Yorkshire race meetings as only six places, Beverley, Doncaster, Hambleton, Kiplingcotes, Malton, and York were reported to have held races in 1746, the first complete year after the Act, although it is likely that Wakefield also had races that year.⁵⁴ In the five years following the 1745 Act, races were reported at fifteen Yorkshire courses. By 1748, Barnsley, Richmond, Ripon, Selby, Wakefield and Wetherby were holding regular race meetings whilst one race was run at Pocklington; Yarm races were reported in 1749 and Sheffield in 1750. However, several of these race meetings did not comply fully with the new law, notably Barnsley, Pocklington, Ripon, Selby and Wetherby, all of which openly and illegally, advertised in the York Courant that some of their races were to be run for small prizes of between £3 and £15, or veiled as 'a purse of gold', or '£6 and upwards'.⁵⁵ This practice may have been widespread as it was common enough for the Gentleman's Magazine of 1752 to warn its readers that it was illegal to run 'petty matches' and that people would be fined up to £100 if brought before the Justices of the Peace for this offence.⁵⁶ After 1751, all of the prizes advertised in the York Courant were for at least £50. Records of races held in Yorkshire during 1744 indicate that the race organisers complied with the law so far as the weights that were carried by the horses.

Table 3 has been compiled from the available records of races held in Yorkshire in 1746, which was the first complete modern style year that the Act was in force. It indicates that in the majority of cases the race organisers quickly took advantage of the section of the 1745 Act that allowed them to set their own weights. They could not alter the regulations governing the Royal Plates, but out of twelve races where the organisers could now set their own weights, only two

⁵²Prior Calendar p 114, wrote that in 1745, Parliament took the conduct of the turf into its own hands by setting the minimum value of races, that Parliament laid down the distances to be run by five-year-olds, and younger horses were not deemed racehorses for the purposes of the Act. In fact, Parliament gave back the control of the turf; it had set no distances for any races, nor had it sought to interfere in the racing of young horses.

⁵³Cherry 1742, 1743, 1744; YC 1742-1744

⁵⁴It may be seven, as Wakefield had races in 1745 and later. YC 20 May 1746; J.Orton, ed., Turf annals of York and Doncaster (York 1844) 1746

⁵⁵YC 3, 31 May, 5, 12 Jul, 1 Aug 1748, 29 Aug 1749, 4 Jun 1751, 31 Jul 1750, 4, 25 Jun 1751

⁵⁶GM vol. XXII (1752) p 239

races, for five-year-olds carrying ten stones, required horses to carry the weights that were set in 1740. The organisers of the other races allowed the horses to carry around one stone less than would have been carried under the 1740 legislation. Only one race, at Malton, allowed horses to carry weight for height, and the rest of the races were weight for age, or a standard weight for all competitors in the events. Two races, at York and Malton allowed four-year-olds to run at low weights.⁵⁷

TABLE 3

RACES IN YORKSHIRE IN 1746 SHOWING AGES AND WEIGHTS CARRIED

Age	Number of races	weight
4	1	9 stones
4 or 5	1	8 or 9 stones
5	2	10 stones
5 or 6	1	9 stones 4 pounds or 10 stones
6	2	10 stones
6 or aged	1	10 stones or 10 stones 10 pounds
Aged	1	11 stones
Unspecified	2	10 stones
14 hands	1	10 stones

Following the 1745 Act, race organisers again devised race regulations as they pleased. The only Yorkshire race in which horses were asked to carry as much as twelve stones weight was the Royal Plate run at York. All other races were at weights less than those required by the 1740 Act. Some of the smaller courses came back into existence, or at least, racing was again reported there - races might have continued at some of the places but not been reported. In 1748, the races reported at Barnsley were to be held 'as usual on the Common'. A new meeting was begun at Hull in 1751, and at Follifoot in 1753.⁵⁸

1.4 The proposed legislation of 1759 and the Jockey Club

The increase in the number of towns where horse racing took place coincided with another demand in both Houses of Parliament for more control over the common people. A Bill introduced in 1759 to control all places of entertainment failed to become law only because the House of Lords attempted to levy a tax on these, and the Commons would not allow the Lords

⁵⁷ YC 29 Apr, 20 May 1746; Orton 1746

⁵⁸YC 5 Jul 1748, Chery 1751; R.Heber, ed., An historical list of all the horse races, plates, and prizes run for in Great Britain in 1753 (1754)

to alter any Bill that would affect the purse of the people.⁵⁹ A section of Parliament then tried again to reduce the number of sites and times where horse matches were held.⁶⁰ The legislation of 1740 had closed most small racecourses by setting the prize value at an uneconomic level, and this Bill in 1759 may have been presented to serve the same purpose. Some concern about the management and stated purpose of racing had already been expressed in the Gentleman's Magazine where it was said that horse races were unnecessarily cruel because of the greed of the horse owners, and called for them to be better managed. The writer suggested that as the reason for races was to encourage good breeding, then the sporting gentlemen should allow country gentlemen and farmers who could not afford proper stallions, to have free covering of their mares by these race horses.⁶¹

The 1759 Bill sought to amend the 1740 and 1745 Acts. It attempted to restrict severely the times and places that matches could be run to the same times and places as the Royal Plates, or if no Royal Plate was run, then matches would only be run at one place and time for each county or riding, and these were to be nominated by the Grand Juries of each county. In Yorkshire, only eight matches were run in 1751, five of these were at Hambleton, where matches had been sanctioned even in 1740, and so should have caused little interest, but in 1756, seventeen matches were run. Only five were run in conjunction with the Royal Plates at York or Hambleton. This shows a large increase in the number of matches in Yorkshire, but this was slight compared with the number of matches run at Newmarket where 42 matches were actually run and another ten were cancelled. A total of 72 matches were run in England in 1756. Pond's Racing Kalendar for 1756 also advertised a number of matches arranged for the following four years at Newmarket and York. The wagers on these matches varied from 40 guineas to 1,000 guineas.⁶² The fact that these bets received wide publicity via the Racing Kalendar may have aroused some indignation amongst people who condemned gambling, and they may have introduced this Bill.

A section of the Bill sought to publicise the names of the clerks of the racecourses, and to make them personally responsible for the payment of the full sums advertised as prizes for matches or races, and to ensure that no deductions were made from the prize monies.⁶³ The advertisements for horse races in the newspapers at this time did not normally state the name of the clerk or person responsible for the prize money, and this bill sought to make the printers of such notices responsible for making the clerks personally sign them. This Bill would have

⁵⁹ Almon pp 29-30

⁶⁰ S.Lambert, ed. House of Commons sessional papers of the eighteenth century (Delaware 1975) vol. 11 no.112

⁶¹ GM vol. XXVI (1756) pp 417-418.

⁶² J.Pond, The sporting Kalendar containing an account of what plates and matches have been run for in 1756 (London 1757)

⁶³ Lambert vol. 11 no 112

made one named person responsible in law for any shortfall or deceit in the amount of prize money offered, and actually paid. It is not clear whether the clerks' names were to be printed on the notices. It had not been the custom for this to be done; only one advertisement, for Rotherham Races in 1740, has been found that showed the clerk's name.⁶⁴ Various deductions, including payments to the clerk were made from the prize money at racecourses. This was a legitimate part of the expense of setting up a race meeting and was the accepted custom. The list of articles of the Kiplingcotes Race, from 1669 state that the winner was to pay fifteen shillings to the clerk of the course, from the prize money. The amount paid to the clerk in the 1750s and 1760s varied from five shillings per entry at York, Hull and Scarborough, to half a guinea, by the winner only, at Bishop Burton. An unspecified deduction of twelve shillings was payable by winners at Richmond in 1751.⁶⁵ At this time many courses required all entrants to make a contribution towards the prize for the following year's race, whilst others took an extra contribution from the winner for this purpose.⁶⁶ These payments eroded the value of the prize money by making the winners pay for the running expenses of the race meeting and effectively allowed the organisers to pay smaller prizes than the £50 set by Parliament in 1740 and 1745.

Parliament continually deferred this Bill, and the session was dissolved before further progress could be made, so the Bill did not become law.⁶⁷ It can be no coincidence that around this time a group of gentlemen who were active in horse racing had formed themselves into the Jockey Club that met at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall, London. This club was mentioned in Pond's Sporting Kalendar for 1752, when the members organised a race at Newmarket for their own horses. The Jockey Club were very active in promoting racing, particularly at Newmarket, and from 1756 they can be shown to have begun to regulate their own races. Two years later the Jockey Club had taken effective control of racing at Newmarket, which was by this time regarded as the sport's headquarters, and eventually they became responsible for making and enforcing the rules of English racing.⁶⁸ It is likely that a body of powerful men such as these,⁶⁹ would be able to influence decisions made by Parliament with regard to the regulation of racing, and no doubt put pressure on Parliament not to interfere again in the organisation of

⁶⁴YC 29 Apr 1740 names James Anderton as the clerk

⁶⁵Cheny 1751; YC 2 Jun 1752, 13 Jul 1762, 29 Apr 1760, 25 Jul 1751

⁶⁶YC 4 Jun 1754, 17 Jul 1753

⁶⁷JHC vol. 28 pp 433, 439, 462, 491, 523 on 19, 22 Feb, 6, 19, 30 Mar 1739

⁶⁸Vamplew, The turf pp 78-79; R.Mortimer, The Jockey Club (London 1958) pp 10-11. In the eighteenth century, the word 'jockey' did not refer to a horse rider, but to someone who managed or dealt in horses. J.A.Simpson & E.Weiner eds., Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford 1989)

⁶⁹Cook p 263, names Hugo Meynell, Stapleton, Wentworth and Turner, Sir James Lowther and the Duke of Bridgewater as early members; all were rich influential men, the first four were also MPs

horse racing during the eighteenth century. A section of Parliament had tried to restrict the occurrence of horse matches and to place them firmly under the control of the local magistrates. This Bill would also have compelled organisers of race meetings to name those responsible and thus answerable for the financial arrangements of race meetings. The horse racing gentry in the Commons may have preferred to reject any further interference in their sport, although the part of the Bill dealing with the clerks and money would have been to their advantage, but the restriction on matches certainly was not. Most of the people who raced horses did not seek merely to make profit out of their prize money; there was great prestige in owning a winning horse, and far more profit, (or loss) to be made by selling winning horses, or by gambling. The motives for owning racehorses are discussed in section 6.11. It is likely that the racing gentry, well represented in Parliament, felt that they could control racing adequately for themselves without allowing Parliament to meddle again in their sport.⁷⁰

1.5 The legislation of 1784

There was no further interference from Parliament in the organisation of horse racing, but together with many other features of life, it was seen as a source of revenue to the government. In 1784, a new duty was ordered as a means of defraying public expenses. All saddle horses i.e. those kept for riding, as opposed to work, were taxed at the rate of ten shillings per annum. Horses entered to run in races were to be taxed at two guineas annually, payable to the clerk of the racecourse who would issue a licence. Failure to pay was punishable by a fine and confiscation of the horse. A severe penalty of £100 was to be levied on the clerk if he neglected to collect the tax, or to hand the money over to the revenue authority within fourteen days.⁷¹ This Act appears to have had no effect upon racing; the sum was small compared with the cost of entering a race when many events were sweepstakes with an entry payment of 20 guineas or 100 guineas each horse.⁷² This Act merely raised a tax upon racehorses, and considering the large number of racehorses at this time, meant that a good sum would be raised easily, and at no expense to the Excise Department. It was estimated that this tax was paid on 1600 horses c.1790,⁷³ but it was not Parliament's stated intention that the Act should interfere with any aspect of horse racing.

Summary

During the whole of the eighteenth century, Parliament had little interest in reforming or regulating horse racing per se, or the gambling associated with it. On only one occasion

⁷⁰The Jockey Club successfully prevented Parliamentary interference in racing in 1860 but failed to do so in 1878-1879. Vamplew, The turf p 99

⁷¹24 Geo III c 31; Parliament considered, but rejected, a levy of 1 guinea every time a horse raced, with a tax on winnings of 5.25% JHC vol. 40 p 374 on 26 Jul 1784 ; Prior Calendar p 114 wrongly states that the tax of ten shillings on saddle horses and 2 guineas on racehorses was introduced as part of the 1740 Act

⁷²YC 27 May 1783, 26 Oct 1784

Parliament acted to significantly alter the pattern of British horse racing, and then five years later it allowed the laws to be considerably relaxed. The government was concerned with maintaining a stable domestic economy, and defending Britain and British interests at home and overseas. Following the experience of the War of the Spanish Succession, and with the prospect of a Jacobite rising, Parliament discussed the improvement of the type of horse available for the cavalry in 1715, and although the Bill was not made law, the northern breeders recognised the commercial potential open to them and bred strong chargers for cavalry officers.

The source of wealth for the domestic economy was dependent to a large extent upon the labour of the common people, and it was a widely held belief that it was necessary to ensure that workers did not spend their time in unproductive recreation that could encourage idleness and result in poverty. It would have been impossible for Parliament to prevent some of the events, like fairs, wakes and holidays where the ordinary folk gathered to enjoy themselves. Fairs were absolutely essential to trade, and all were held by rights granted by ancient royal charters that may have been impossible to repeal. The closing of fairs would have resulted in riots, and a whole system of trading would have been thrown into disarray, with its public safeguards lost. The customary wakes and other holidays were rooted in traditions which went back further than anyone knew and the only means available to the government was to try to curtail some of the attractions at the events, and horse racing and gambling on games of chance were the most obvious undesirable features. The growing press coverage of horse racing drew attention to it as a frequent and widespread diversion for the people. In 1739, legislation was introduced to end gambling on games of chance, and in 1740, a law was passed to bring to an end the majority of horse racing events by indirect means. Parliament knew quite well that most race organisers did not, and would not in future, be able to offer prizes that would satisfy the requirements of the new law, and so the government was able, at a stroke, to bring to an end at most places, a day when the common people were encouraged by the race organisers to drink and waste their time and money. The responsibility for stopping the races was put upon the organisers and horse owners who would have been fined, rather than sending in soldiers, or magistrates and constables to break up the proceedings. The second reason for the 1740 Act was said to be that horse racing in its present form was prejudicial to the breeding of strong and useful horses. This was to be remedied by compelling the horses that did race, to carry heavier weights than in the past. It was this part of the Act that was potentially the most damaging to the future development of horse racing. The government failed to see that the breeding of race horses was a very small part of the horse breeding industry, and that very few horses became racers; some men raced their hunters or riding horses for fun, but most horses were bred to become working animals, as did the failed racehorses. This must have become

⁷³W.Taplin, The gentleman's stable directory, or modern system of farriery (London 1796) vol. 2 p 387

obvious when the army was able to buy plenty of horses to replace those lost in the campaigns of 1743-1746 without any special breeding programme being set up.

The racehorse breeders recognised that enormous damage to horse racing as a competitive sport, and thus to the breeding of fine quality riding horses, would be brought about by an increase in racing weights, and this was the main item in their petition to Parliament in 1741. This petition asked that the lower limit for prize money should be £40 instead of £50, but this would have made little difference to the number of race meetings that closed, because most of these only gave prizes of around £10 before 1740.

Parliament saw by 1745 that its aim of closing down the small race meetings had been achieved, and that these races were unable to revive, and then it acceded to the earlier request for the section on the carrying of heavy weights to be repealed. This opened up many possibilities for racing younger horses that would carry light weights over short distances.

In 1759, a section of Parliament tried to restrict the times and places that matches could be run and to enforce more strictly the £50 minimum prize money, but the majority of members refused to sanction the Bill. By this time a powerful, if unofficial club of wealthy racing gentlemen had been formed, and this may have played a large part in preventing further interference by the government in horse racing. The racehorse owners then continued to organise and regulate all aspects the sport for themselves. A very small tax on racehorses was introduced by Parliament in 1784, but this was an insignificant part of horse racing expenses and had no effect on racing.

In the eighteenth century, the government did not legislate against gambling on horse races or matches. None of the Acts that regulated gambling mentions horse races, although the other activities that people betted on were specifically defined, and bets on horse races were common enough for them to be named had Parliament so desired. Parliamentarians were amongst the most avid gamblers on horse races and would not have put their own pleasures beyond the law.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORGANISATION AND FUNDING OF THE RACES 1700-1749

On Scarborough Sands...All horses, &c. that are to run for the Two 20L Plates, and 10L Plate: are to be kept in the Town of Scarborough Seven days before their Running, at such Houses as have subscribed a Guinea to the said races...¹

The organisation of any competition, like a horse race, requires two basic factors: a prize and a set of published rules by which the event can be seen to be fair to all of the competitors. This section examines the several sources of the prizes, and the motives of the donors, who were able to dictate the conditions of entry to a race and every aspect of the conduct of the competitors before, during and after the race. The race rules were always called the articles, because they formed a legally binding code of conduct between the owners of the horses and the people who provided the prize. Race organisers or proprietors were quite independent, and so could compose the articles to suit their own requirements and circumstances. Most race meetings were arranged to bring trade to a town or village and so the articles in this case would contain conditions about the financial arrangements as well as rules by which the competitions were governed.

2.1 The sources of race prizes

Introduction

Many communities enjoyed the excitement and spectacle of horse races. The towns and villages that held these events attracted a variety of people from a wide area who would spend money and bring trade. A great number of factors could determine the viability of a race meeting, but the principal consideration was the ability of the promoters to provide a suitable prize.² As well as the pleasure that the event brought, it is evident that various sections of society could expect to profit financially from race meetings and these were the people who could be prevailed upon to contribute to a prize fund. Tradesmen whose business would be increased directly by the competing horses and the crowds attending the race meeting could be coerced into paying towards the prize, and the corporations of some towns with many businesses that benefited less directly from the races, would sometimes donate prize money for the general profitability that the races brought to the area. The gentry and wealthy breeders who raced their horses regularly subscribed to race prizes as 'founders' for which they received certain privileges, but other gentlemen subscribed merely because they wanted to support the

¹ YC 22 Jul 1729

² Vamplew The turf p 21

events. Matches and sweepstakes were self-financing events that required no external funding but sometimes took advantage of an organised meeting's course and facilities. The largest prizes by far were given by the Crown to promote the breeding of sturdy horses and these races drew the best horses and largest crowds so that many towns sought to be allowed to hold a Royal Plate race, particularly as it involved the organisers in little or no outlay.

This section will also examine the way that race meetings were organised during the early eighteenth century, by using two sets of complete race articles and the abbreviated lists of conditions for other race meetings that were published in newspaper advertisements. Race articles were the set of rules by which the races were governed, and these formed a contract with the owners of the competing horses. It will be demonstrated that at this time the race organisers were able to set their own rules, and could suit local opinions and conditions, and that each race meeting was independently organised in an efficient manner, because the articles were compiled by educated gentlemen, or men who were experienced in the ways of racing. The articles were effective in controlling the entries to races, even someone as influential as Lord Godolphin could not circumvent the conditions, so that in 1706, he wrote to the Duke of Marlborough:

We were disappointed of running our horse at Oxford; where wee had a great design upon the Plate, but the articles excluded us.³

The people who provided the prizes influenced the way in which horse races were organised; they held the purse strings, and so were able to dictate the terms and conditions to be observed by the competitors. This was done by setting out the articles. There was no central governing body in horse racing in the early eighteenth century, and so the organisers of each race meeting devised a set of articles to suit themselves; these were partly determined by local conditions and opinions, and so the articles varied slightly from place to place to accommodate any local requirements. The advertisement for Beverley races in 1731 stated:

to run according to Articles, as the Founders shall think proper; the Articles to be shewn the Day they enter, and to Run accordingly.⁴

There was some movement towards standardisation of race articles when John Cheny,⁵ who was at the hub of the English racing world, reported in his racing calendar that he had been asked to publish a standard set of racing articles which could be used as a pattern, and also to lay down the rules regarding betting, 'founded on the Dictates or Judgement of Newmarket.' A

³H.L.Snyder, ed., The Marlborough Godolphin correspondence (Oxford 1975) vol. 2 p 679

⁴YC 10 May 1731

⁵John Cheny compiled the earliest known racing calendar in 1727 that covered most of the race meetings in England.

set of regulations devised by King Charles II for races at Newmarket in the seventeenth century existed, and these were mandatory in the Royal Plate races, but they had no legal authority elsewhere, and were at other events, only a gentlemen's arrangement. Cheny printed the articles relating to the Royal Plate races in 1739 and showed that the jostling and crossing, which was allowed at some race meetings, was specifically forbidden in these races.⁶

2.1.1 Crown sponsorship

The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were times of great political unrest and military activity both at home and abroad.⁷ The English Civil War, followed by the problems caused by James II, William III's wars in Europe, the War of the Spanish Succession and the Jacobite risings served to remind the country's leaders that horses were essential to any military venture. Strong, fast horses with plenty of stamina were needed and so the Crown tried to encourage breeders to produce this type of horse rather than sprinters, and is said to have provided some prizes for English horse races at least since the days of Charles II. Several prizes were known as the King's Plates, but it appears that at first the Crown contributed only part of the money for them.⁸ Charles II is usually thought of as a great supporter of horse racing, but it was probably William III, a less glamorous or popular monarch, but a racing man who instituted a Royal Plate at Newmarket that was financed solely by the Treasury, to encourage the breeding of strong horses with staying power.⁹ The Treasury Books show that in 1696 William authorised £120 to be paid to Tregonwell Frampton, his Master of the Horse, for a plate at Newmarket; the King also paid for repairs to the Newmarket racecourse rails.¹⁰ The same accounts show that the Crown provided two 100 guineas race prizes each year at Newmarket in 1697 and 1701, and one prize in 1698, 1699 and 1700.¹¹ At first, the money for them came from the king's Secret Service account at the Treasury, this was the king's private money that was used for personal payments as well as inducements to MPs.¹² Other royal prizes may have been given but not recorded in the extant accounts. After William's death, his sister-in-law Queen Anne, another keen racehorse owner, continued to pay for some 100

⁶Prior Calendar pp 108- 111

⁷Many regiments were short of supplies, including horses, at the end of the seventeenth century. H.Horowitz, Parliament, policy and politics in the reign of William III (Manchester 1977) p 91

⁸Cook pp 101, 106. Cook quotes the articles for the plate instituted by Charles II at Newmarket which shows that there were several contributors to the prize, and also LG for 4 Aug 1684 which states that subscriptions for the King's Plate at Winchester should be paid into Child's Bank.

⁹C.R.Eltrington ed. A history of the county of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely Victoria History of the Counties of England (London 1973) vol. 5 pp 279-281; Horowitz pp 183, 231; S.B.Baxter William III (New York 1966) pp 124, 364, 400

¹⁰CTB vol. 11 p 131, vol. 10 p 1181

¹¹CTB vol. 12 p 34; vol. 17 pp 814, 911, 929, 840, 867, 896; vol. 16 p 13; LG 7 Apr 1701

¹²CTB vol. 16 p 514; Horowitz pp 62, 98; G.M.Trevelyan The peace and the Protestant succession (London 1965) p 64n

guinea Royal Plates at Newmarket¹³ and one plate for £50 at Datchet, close to Windsor Castle in 1706,¹⁴ but in 1702 the queen made a most significant contribution to the progress of Yorkshire horse racing, by donating a 100 guineas Royal Plate for a race to be held in the county. This prize subsequently became an annual gift. The course where the race was to be run was not specified in the treasury accounts for some years, probably because there was no single central or principal racecourse in Yorkshire. The first race was held at Bramham Moor,¹⁵ and in the following years at various other Yorkshire courses¹⁶ until 1711, when York became the permanent venue. Queen Anne's prizes took the form of gold cups valued at 100 guineas that were paid for by the Treasury.¹⁷ The gold cup won at Bramham Moor in 1708 is illustrated in Figure 1; its weight was 50 oz.¹⁸ The first event was advertised in the London Gazette, for six-year old horses, carrying twelve stones weight, and ridden by gentlemen, in three heats. The stipulation that only gentlemen should ride was lifted in 1707 to permit grooms to ride.¹⁹ Yorkshire racing was given a second 100 guineas Royal Plate in 1708 by the Queen's husband, Prince George of Denmark; the following year this race became specifically for mares less than six years old, to carry ten stones, and was run at Hambleton every year except 1725 when it was held at Richmond.²⁰ The Queen and her husband were keen followers of horse racing and they were also concerned with the sport's influence on the breeding of horses for commercial and military purposes, and to this end inaugurated this competition to find mares with good racing capabilities, and to encourage their use in breeding in place of the old practice of using any convenient female as a brood mare.²¹ Two good racehorses as parents are more likely to produce similar offspring than one racehorse and one carthorse. Another Royal Plate for mares was inaugurated at Newmarket at the same time.²² The weights to be carried by horses

¹³CTB vol. 17 p 41

¹⁴CTB vol. 21 p 133

¹⁵W.Calverley, The memorandum book of Sir Walter Calverley Bart., ed., S.Margerison, Yorkshire diaries and autobiographies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Publications of the Surtees Society vol. 77 (Durham 1883) pp 43-148, p 97

¹⁶1702 Bramham Moor, 1703 Stapleton Leys, 1704 Doncaster, 1705 Hambleton, 1706 Richmond, 1707 Langton Wold (New Malton), 1708 Bramham Moor, 1709 Richmond, 1710 Langton Wold (New Malton), 1711 Clifton Ings York. LG 3 Aug 1702; 19 Jul 1703; Christie Manson & Woods, Catalogue of Old English gold and silver plate: the property of Capt. Adrian Bethell to be sold on Wed 24 April 1929 (London 1929) p 7; W.Chaytor, The papers of Sir William Chaytor of Croft 1639-1721 ed., M.V.Ashcroft NYCRO Publications no. 33 (Northallerton 1984) p 214; LG 17 Jun 1706, 26 Jun 1707, 24 Jun 1708, 23 Jun 1709, 24 Jun 1710

¹⁷CTB vol. 20 p 319

¹⁸Christie p 56

¹⁹LG 26 Jun 1707

²⁰It was transferred to York races in 1776. Orton p 126

²¹The idea that any characteristics could be inherited from both parents was not common at this time; many people thought that only a male animal could pass on strength and speed. W. Marshall, The rural economy of Yorkshire (London 1788) vol. 2 p 166; even in the early part of this century, some breeders felt that the male line was a safer guide to racing ability than the female. Craig pp 152-153

²²Cheny 1730

running for the Royal Plates, which seem excessive by modern standards, were common stipulations at the time these races were instituted, and were said to be the weight of a cavalryman with his equipment, so that horses were being tried as carriers of men and equipment at speed, and for a reasonable distance, rather than sprinters, to encourage breeders to produce strong horses. One of the complaints at the time of the Act of 1740, which restricted certain horse races, was that breeders were not producing the sturdy animals required for military and commercial use.²³ It is unclear when the Royal Plates in some other counties were inaugurated, as there appears to have been less advertising of them in the London Gazette, and little mention of them in the Treasury accounts. However, there were ten Royal Plates by 1727.²⁴ There is no indication that the owners of horses competing in the Yorkshire Royal Plates paid any of the expenses connected with the race, or any stake money. The events were organised by Richard Marshall; the Master of the Queen's Stud, and the Earl of Carlisle.²⁵

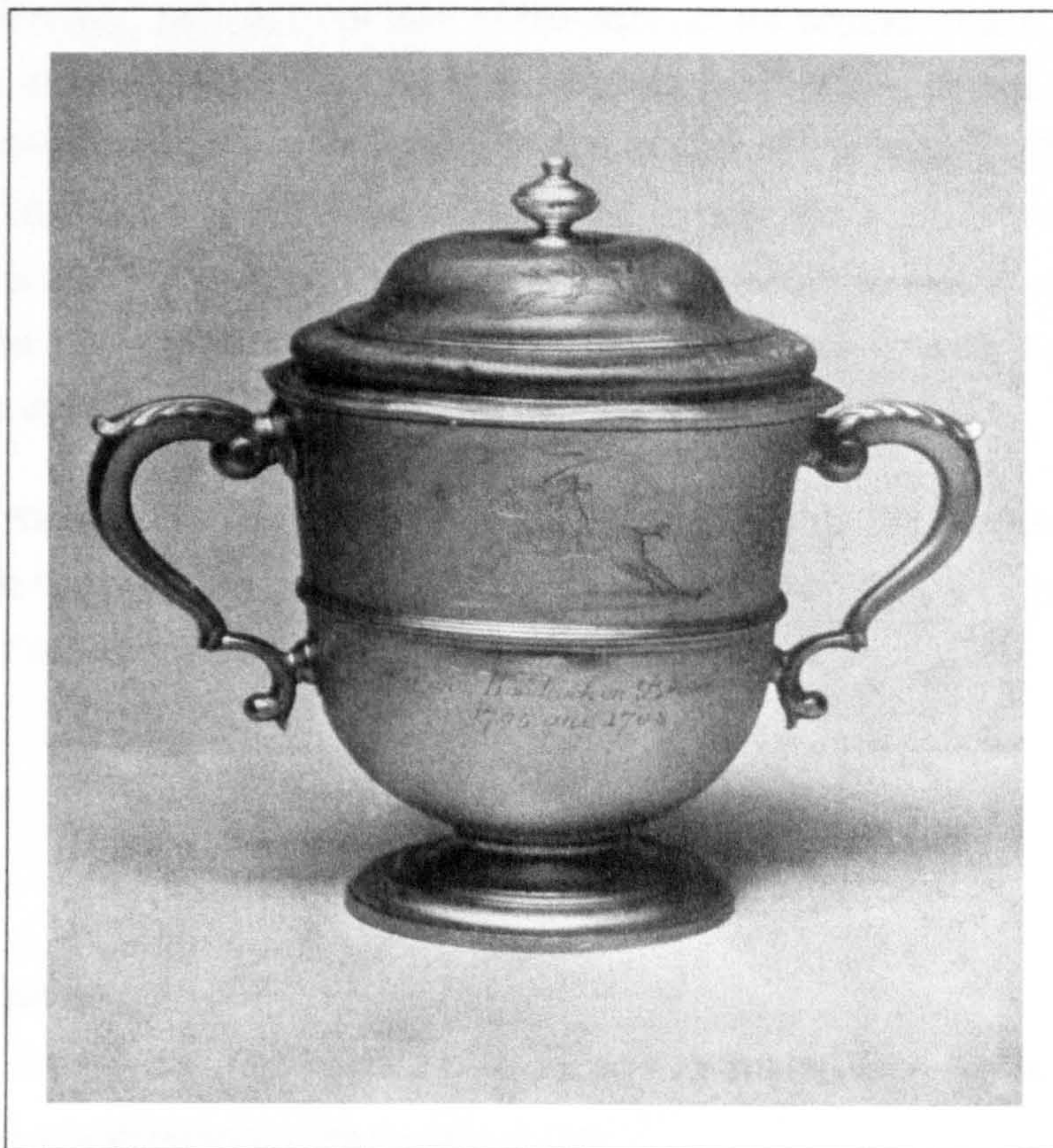


FIGURE 1

QUEEN ANNE'S GOLD CUP 1705 & 1708 AT BRAMHAM MOOR
From Christie, Manson & Wood Catalogue of old English gold and silver plate.

²³13 Geo II c19

²⁴Cheny mentions two at Newmarket, and one each at York, Hambleton, Nottingham, Lincoln, Guildford, Winchester, Lewes, and Salisbury in 1727

²⁵CTB vol. 26 pp 357, 468

2.1.2 Gentry sponsorship of races

Two types of gentry sponsored races existed during the early eighteenth century. One-off subscriptions to endowed races, and occasional, or annual subscription races. Both types of event allowed the interested parties a degree of control over some aspects of the events including the date, place, and rules.²⁶ Many advertisements for race meetings mention that the founders or subscribers were allowed to pay a reduced entry fee if they wanted to enter a horse in the race, in return for their subscription.²⁷ A race could be endowed in perpetuity if the prize was assured either from the interest on a sum of money designated for this purpose, or from a rent charge on land.²⁸

Only a very few perpetually endowed races are known to have existed.²⁹ They were set up by people with sufficient foresight and influence to collect, and invest securely, a sum that could provide a good annual race prize. In Yorkshire, the Kiplingcotes race prize of sixteen guineas was funded in this way, however, the date of the contract for setting up this race is not known although it was probably 1669 when 49 of the highest ranking and richest gentlemen of the county each subscribed sums between £5 and £30 to finance the race.³⁰ The £365 so raised was invested privately, and the income was used to pay for a silver trophy each year.³¹ Although the value of the prize was only sixteen guineas, which sounds a small sum, the cup won in 1702 was made of 37oz of hallmarked silver, which was actually a substantial trophy and is shown here as Figure 2.³² The articles for this race state that:

Every man that is a Founder he is to put Twenty Shillings in Gold for his stake when he hath a horse, gelding or mare that runs for the prize, and every other person Four Pounds in Gold.

²⁶YC 22 Sep 1730 Otley races

²⁷YC 22 Jul 1729 Scarborough races, YC 7 Apr 1730 Doncaster, YC 9 Jun 1730 Knaresborough etc

²⁸These races were specifically exempted by the legislation of 1740

²⁹These were at Farn Cheshire, Kiplingcotes Yorkshire, and Barham Downs Kent - all were run in the month of March. Prior Calendar p 113

³⁰Susan Neave has realistically dated the endowment of the race to 1669, and not 1519, which J.Fairfax Blakeborough and others quote. S.Neave 'Kiplingcotes - the oldest horse race in England: fact or fiction' The Bulletin EYLHS no 46 (Summer 1992) pp 12-15; Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 143

³¹A.Ellerington, The Kiplingcotes Derby (Beverley 1990) p 5 -states that the money is now invested in a building society

³²Christie p 8. This shows a large plain two-handled cup 7.5 in high by 7.5 in diameter engraved: 'Maggott on Kiplingcotes 19 March 1702. Porter p xv suggests that multiplying eighteenth century sums by 60 or 80 will give a rough-and-ready guide to 1990 equivalent values; this would make the trophy worth between £1,000 and £1,300. He estimates that sixteen guineas would have kept a gentleman in style for three weeks in the eighteenth century.

Thus the original subscribers, and their male heirs, subsequently paid one pound as a stake, and other people paid £4 stake money. The stake money provided the prize for the second best horse, and if there were enough entries then the second horse might win more than the first. The winning owner had to pay fifteen shillings to the clerk of the course, and two shillings and six pence to the starter; all competitors paid one shilling to the clerk of the race so that the expenses of running the race, and the second prize were met by the competitors.³³



FIGURE 2

THE KIPLINGCOTES SILVER CUP 1702

From Christie, Manson & Wood, Catalogue of old English gold and silver plate

Many race prizes were financed directly from the gentry by means of voluntary subscriptions. These payments have occasionally been found amongst the accounts of the men concerned, either as single or annual voluntary contributions, or by a record of an agreement tabled by a committee for a fixed term.³⁴ A group of gentlemen would contract to make an annual donation for a fixed term of years so that racing at a given venue would be guaranteed for a period, and in return, if the subscribers entered any horses for these races then their entry fees

³³Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 pp 141-143, reproduced in Appendix 1 here

³⁴ Examples in Prior Early records p 64

would be reduced,³⁵ but many men gave their guineas each year with no intention of running a horse themselves. At Richmond the money was collected and held by the mayor who acted as the clerk of the races, and recorded the names of the owners, riders, and the nominated tryers or judges.³⁶ In 1722, some gentlemen agreed to pay one guinea annually for three years to provide prizes for the races at York.³⁷ Two races were organised at Richmond in 1724 for terms of five, and seven years, with subscriptions from a group of racing gentlemen who wanted to arrange a particularly valuable race of 100 guineas prize for the winner and 20 guineas for the second horse, and a £60 prize for another race.³⁸ The subscription list suggests that people paid what they pleased, up to a maximum of 19 guineas, some, like the Earl of Carlisle, paid this in two instalments, others in four, and some paid for only one year whilst others who had been expected to subscribe, never paid anything, so that 153 guineas was raised in the first year, but only 34 guineas in 1729. A total of only 347 guineas was subscribed over six years so that for most years the prize money would be far less than 125 guineas, although the prize is unlikely to have been awarded as cash, or even in the form of a cup; in 1729 the Richmond prize was a soup dish with ladle, and a coffee pot.³⁹ At Gatherley Moor, 21 gentlemen subscribed one guinea apiece annually for five years for a hunter's race between 1737-1741; the subscribers paid one guinea entry if they entered a horse, whilst others paid three guineas.⁴⁰ The subscriptions as well as the entry fees were awarded to the winner, so that for two guineas outlay, an owner might win 29 guineas, which was quite a good return, as well as the prestige, stud fees, and the enjoyment involved.⁴¹ There is evidence that both regular race meetings, including those at Middleham, and New Malton, and infrequent ones like Caulkley near Nunnington, had some race prizes provided at least in part by gentry subscribers.⁴² Barnsley races received regular support from the wealthy Wentworth family who lived nearby,⁴³ and another family member, the Earl of Stafford, donated a plate as a prize in 1718. The earl's agent was made responsible for collecting the subscriptions for a plate at Wakefield races nearby.⁴⁴ Richard Sykes of Sledmere was not a racehorse owner but he

³⁵YC 22 Jul 1729

³⁶NYCRO DC/RMB 5/4/5-8

³⁷G.Benson, York race meetings (York 1914) np including Sir William St.Quintin, and the Earl of Carlisle

³⁸NYCRO DC/RMB 5/4/7,12; Prior Early records pp 64-65

³⁹ List reproduced from Cuthbert Routh's Stud Book in Prior Early records p 64; NYCRO DC/RMB 5/4/11

⁴⁰Cheny 1738

⁴¹Cheny 1737, 1738, 1739

⁴² Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 168; HUL DDSY 98/40; LG 23 Aug 1708

⁴³G.E.Wentworth ed., 'The history of the Wentworths of Woolley' YAJ vol. 12 1893 pp 1-35, 159-185; Wentworth also subscribed to the Doncaster Plate in 1709 and was MP for Malton in 1713-1737. G.R.Park, The Parliamentary representation of Yorkshire (Hull 1886) p 135

⁴⁴Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 27

certainly enjoyed a day at the races, and as a founder regularly subscribed his two guineas to the races at New Malton.⁴⁵ In 1749 a race at Hambleton attracted 21 subscribers of five guineas per year for three years; the subscribers paid one guinea entry whilst others paid ten guineas entry, plus one guinea to the clerk of the course for expenses. The subscribers were mainly Yorkshire men and included many of the prominent local owners like Cuthbert Routh of Bedale, Simon Scrope of Danby on Yore, and Thomas Duncombe of Helmsley.⁴⁶ It was probably difficult getting people to pay annual subscriptions and it is unclear whether the subscribers always agreed to pay annually, but in some cases, the payments were certainly irregular. Some subscriptions may have been given as occasional gifts; in 1727, Sir Edward Gascoigne subscribed one guinea to a York plate and half a guinea to the plate at the Temple Newsome course that was close to his Methley home.⁴⁷ Financing a race by subscriptions allowed the gentlemen control over the date, and the terms of the race, and as organisers, they would settle any disputes in the way they wanted.

2.1.3 Political sponsorship

A free parliamentary borough that had races could expect its Member and prospective candidates to subsidise the race prizes.⁴⁸ At Beverley, the local Members of Parliament made donations towards the race prizes - Sir Charles Hotham, one of the MPs, regularly gave fifteen guineas,⁴⁹ whilst MPs Charles Pelham and Sir Charles Coddington contributed sums of up to £30 which were well publicised donations in 1748 and 1749.⁵⁰ MPs had to keep the electors contented by means other than their policies, as the Beverley historian K.A. MacMahon wrote:

It paid a Member to keep his seat warm ... the popularity of a Member was in fact largely to be measured by the capacity of his pocket and his willingness to put his hand in it.⁵¹

Ellerker Bradshaw gave £15 in 1739, and £10 in 1740⁵² to the Beverley races as the local representative. At York, the races received donations of twenty guineas each from the Duke of Wharton in 1721,⁵³ Charles Turner in 1726, who was elected MP for the county in 1727, and

⁴⁵HUL DDSY 98/40

⁴⁶Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 52

⁴⁷LCRO GC/16/129, 7Aug 1727

⁴⁸Vamplew The turf p 21

⁴⁹HUL DDHO 15/6 1730-1736

⁵⁰YC 12 Apr 1748, 11 Apr 1749; Pelham also donated £30 in 1739, £20 in 1740. YC 1 May 1739, 22 Apr 1740

⁵¹MacMahon, Beverley p 66

⁵²YC 1 May 1739, 22 Apr 1740

⁵³Orton 1721; Wharton owned Aske Hall, Richmond up to 1727, W.Page ed., The Victoria History of the county of York North Riding vol. 1 (London 1914) p 61

from Sir George Savile in 1728, the year that he was elected.⁵⁴ The disgraced former Chancellor of the Exchequer and MP for Ripon, John Aislabie donated sums of £25, £30 and £45 between 1722-1724, and his wife gave a plate worth £12-£15 to another Ripon race that was for female riders.⁵⁵ Aislabie was briefly imprisoned in the Tower in 1721 after being found guilty of 'most notorious, infamous, and dangerous corruption' over his handling of the Government's involvement with the South Sea Company and the resulting South Sea bubble crash, one of the worst financial disasters of the century, and was forced into retirement from public office; his sponsorship of the local race meeting may have been an attempt to regain favour with the local gentry for himself and his relations who remained in politics.⁵⁶

2.1.4 Commercial sponsorship

Several types of tradesmen were able to benefit considerably from a popular race meeting, particularly if it was held at a time when business might otherwise be slack. Innkeepers, stable keepers, and providers of refreshment and entertainment could all make a considerable amount of money from a race meeting, and it could certainly be in their interest to promote and sponsor such an event. One of the usual conditions for entering a race was to compel the racehorse owners to stable their horses only at inns or stables that had contributed towards the race fund, the amount usually being half a guinea, or a guinea if a longer meeting.⁵⁷ The horses were often expected to spend several days in these premises, and the business was spread amongst the areas' stables by fixing a maximum number of animals per house.⁵⁸

Some records have survived from the Halifax races, to show that many of the townspeople subscribed to provide prizes for annual races there: 'in consideration of the benefitt and Advantage we Expect to have and Receive by the said HorseRaces.'⁵⁹ A deed of subscription was drawn up in 1737 by 'the 'Innkeepers, Alehousekeepers, and Other Inhabitants in and about the Town, Township and neighbourhood of Halifax' to finance a prize of fifteen guineas for a horse race for six years, showing the names of the 99 men and women who paid sums of between one shilling and ten shillings and six pence, but as three failed to pay, the money collected only amounted to fifteen pounds and nine shillings. Halifax had raised money in this way earlier; in 1736 more than 300 people had subscribed over £65 for races to be run on

⁵⁴Orton 1726, 1728; Park p 23

⁵⁵W.Harrison ed., Ripon Millenary (Ripon 1892) pp 84, 93; Gill p 179 believes that Aislabie's motive was to suborn the civic authorities rather than philanthropy.

⁵⁶R.Sedgwick The House of Commons 1715-1754 The history of Parliament (London 1970) pp 409-412; Porter pp 109, 203

⁵⁷For Scarborough races, the inns were made to contribute one guinea for a five-day meeting, whereas for Otley races, the inns paid half a guinea for a two-day meeting. YC 22 Jul 1729, 22 Sep 1730

⁵⁸Maximum of four horses per establishment at Malton. YC 3 Apr 1739

⁵⁹WYAS Calderdale Misc 325/4

Skircoat Common. Samuel Armitage a gentleman landowner and racehorse owner who became a baronet, was one of the collectors and donated two guineas, whilst some people gave only six pence, and three inns contributed a guinea apiece. Even the Officers of the Excise collected subscription money amounting to eleven pounds and ten shillings for them.⁶⁰ In that year the races were advertised to be run over three days with prize money amounting to £60, however for some reason, the first day's racing was cancelled, and only £40 was paid out.⁶¹ In other places, traders who profited from the extra business that the visitors to the races brought to a town, like the butchers and sailors of Scarborough, who respectively provided meat, fish, and pleasure boat trips, each sponsored a day of racing by giving their own prizes worth £5 and £10.⁶² Those businesses that might expect to profit directly at the race meetings by supplying refreshments of food or drink on the course were charged for setting up their booths or tents on the race ground which also helped to pay for the prizes.⁶³ At Beverley, where the inhabitants had a monopoly on the sale of refreshments at the races, the sellers of ale paid five shillings for a booth, whilst the wine sellers paid ten shillings and six pence; since, presumably, wine produced a greater profit.⁶⁴ Almost all race organisers must have depended somewhat on the contributions from these rents to pay for the prizes.⁶⁵ It was possible to charge rent on common land because such places were under the jurisdiction either of a town corporation or the lord of the manor in rural areas and since medieval times they had been able to make and enforce their own regulations.⁶⁶ This privilege was underlined in 1748 when the advertisement for the race meeting at Wetherby stated that:

By order of Sir Thomas Gascoign, Lord of the Manor, that no Person shall erect a Tent, or sell any Sort of Liquors upon the Course, unless they subscribe two Shillings to the above Prizes; Clifford excepted.

The races were run on Clifford Moor, some three miles to the south-east of Wetherby and this regulation suggests that the Clifford villagers either could do as they pleased on their own common, or were allowed a special privilege.⁶⁷ Bishop Burton races were sponsored by the

⁶⁰WYAS Calderdale Misc 325/3

⁶¹Cheny 1737

⁶²YC 22 Jul 1729

⁶³Rotherham races YC 1 May 1739

⁶⁴K.A.MacMahon Beverley Corporation Minute Books 1707-1835 YASRS vol. 122 (Leeds 1956) pp 14, 24-25

⁶⁵Vamplew The turf p 21

⁶⁶E.Miller & J.Hatcher Medieval England (London 1978) pp 97-100

⁶⁷YC 1 Aug 1748

local innkeepers who had the monopoly of stabling the competing horses, and the supply of refreshments at the races.⁶⁸

2.1.5 Civic sponsorship

Town and borough authorities could support horse races in two ways: by the provision of a racetrack, or by the donation of prizes. Most races were held on public land like commons where no charge could be made for entry, and so it was not possible to recoup any investment in draining or laying out a track, and only a town corporation or manor court had any authority to modify these sites.⁶⁹ To spend public money on measuring and setting out a race track meant that the authorities had to be fairly certain of attracting increased trade to the town, and this probably meant that a long meeting would be encouraged to obtain the maximum return on the investment. Three town authorities were known to be responsible for laying out new race grounds around the period studied; Beverley in 1690,⁷⁰ Ripon in 1714 and 1721,⁷¹ and York in 1730.⁷² These towns all used their courses for at least two or three day meetings. Beverley does not appear to have held races before its corporation consented to a track being measured and marked out on the town's pasture. Races had been held at Ripon for many years when the corporation ordered a new course to be made on the High Common closer to the town. York had held races for many years on Clifton Ings, to the north west of the city, but in 1730 the corporation deliberately expropriated the extant race meeting, and with it, the prestigious Royal Plate race, on to land entirely under its own jurisdiction, which was drained and levelled specifically for that purpose at a cost of £100.⁷³

Although the Yorkshire town corporations often encouraged races to be held on public land most were reluctant to give public money towards race prizes in the early eighteenth century. Doncaster corporation is known to have donated cash towards race prizes; the sum of £5 that had been given for many years was stopped in 1703, and instead four guineas was offered for seven years towards a plate. In 1710, this was raised to five guineas specifically to encourage racing, and in 1716, £5.7s.6d was allowed for the Town Plate on condition that the gentlemen

⁶⁸YC 6 Feb 1739

⁶⁹New Malton races were held on privately owned land at Langton Wold. YC 3 Apr 1739

⁷⁰ At Beverley: 'Liberty is given to make a convenient ground for a horse course in Westwood; the surveyors to appoint posts to be used in that behalf.' J.Dennett ed. Beverley Borough records 1575-1821 YASRS vol. 74 (Leeds 1932) p 180. Westwood is the town's common pasture.

⁷¹Harrison pp 98, 179. The corporation records show that a racecourse was made on the High Common, and that the ground was levelled for the same purpose in 1721 at public expense.

⁷²F.Drake, Eboracum the history and antiquities of the city of York (York 1736) p 241

⁷³Races had been held on Clifton Ings, just to the north west of the town, however York shared rights over this land with several villages and the lord of the manor, but the new course on the Knavesmire was under the sole jurisdiction of the York Corporation. The wardens of Micklegate Ward were ordered to drain Knavesmire by enforcing the existing commission of sewers, and the pasture masters were ordered to spend £100 on levelling and preparing the ground. P.M.Tillott ed. A history of Yorkshire, the city of York The Victoria history of the counties of England (London 1961) p 245

of the neighbourhood should subscribe for a valuable plate themselves. This was not a new solution to the problem of funding race prizes; the corporation of Richmond had made a similar condition for a race that was initially financed by them in 1662.⁷⁴ Thus for a small outlay, the civic authority could encourage additional private investment in their race meeting. Following the legislation of 1740, the Doncaster Corporation increased their contribution to £20 on condition that the managers of the races provided two plates of £50 value, in order to satisfy the new Act.⁷⁵ A collection was made in York to raise money for the five plates that were run there in 1709, but civic money was not apparently available.⁷⁶ One of the prizes was the Innholder's Plate of £10.⁷⁷ Even small towns with little in the way of civic funds could try to encourage their local race meetings, an example being at Askrigg in 1746 when the sum of twelve shillings and six pence was paid out of public money for a horse race.⁷⁸ The value of the race meetings in bringing trade to a leisure town like York was underlined in 1750, following one of the most successful meetings, about which was written:

There was this day, the greatest appearance of company on the course known for many years; the attendance of subscribers at the Assembly-rooms in the evening was 228, a much larger influx than was ever known so early in the meeting.⁷⁹

This prompted the corporation to subscribe £100 annually, and ten private sponsors gave £10 each, for seven years so that two attractive £100 prizes could be offered.⁸⁰ Each private subscriber was said to have been given a silver ticket for 'entry to the races' on the two days when these events were run.⁸¹ This was probably an inducement to people who had no horse to race, and so could not benefit by reduced race entry fees, so that they would receive some acknowledgement of their generosity. However there has never been any suggestion that ground entry fees were charged onto racecourses at this time,⁸² but a charge was made for

⁷⁴Cook p 61

⁷⁵J. Hunter South Yorkshire (Doncaster 1828) vol. 1 p 29

⁷⁶Drake p 170

⁷⁷ Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 3 p 21

⁷⁸M.Hartley & J.Ingilby, A Yorkshire village (London 1953) p 95

⁷⁹Orton p 54

⁸⁰Cheny 1751

⁸¹Orton p 55

⁸²Vamplew The turf p 18; Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 36

entry to the grandstands and so it seems possible that there was an earlier grandstand on the Knavesmire, before the one designed by Carr in 1754.⁸³

2.1.6 Involuntary subscriptions

Certain race organisers made one of the conditions of entry to a race, that the winner should donate part of his prize to another race prize. Winners at Beverley in 1743 were made to give three guineas, towards the plate for the same race in the following year,⁸⁴ and that year, 1744, the winners had to give £10 or £20 towards the subsequent year's prize - a huge proportion of their £50 winnings.⁸⁵ This indirect method of reducing the advertised prize money was subsequently prohibited by the Act of 1745 that specifically aimed to prevent this circumvention of the law of 1740 which had made prizes of less than £50 illegal.⁸⁶ After 1745, smaller sums were still required towards the next year's prizes at the meetings at Beverley, New Malton, Richmond and Ripon, but this seems to have produced no complaints.⁸⁷

The system of providing a prize for the second best horse was funded by the competitors themselves. All races except the Royal Plates took an entrance charge from each competitor, and this money was awarded as the second prize.⁸⁸ Subscribers or founders usually paid only half the entry fee which usually varied from five or ten shillings to two guineas.⁸⁹ The stakes could amount to a tidy consolation prize of eighteen or even 36 guineas,⁹⁰ which was considerably more than the winner's prize of two or three guineas at smaller provincial race meetings,⁹¹ and the stakes prize encouraged people to enter horses even though they knew that a very good horse was due to compete.

2.1.7 Matches

Matches were usually privately arranged races that might be held in conjunction with a race meeting or as a single event. Both parties put up a sum of money that was not always equal, and the winner took the total. The arrangement was like each man betting upon himself. The

⁸³N.Pevsner Yorkshire: York and the East Riding (London 1989) p 158. There was a stand at Doncaster in 1615 but it may have been for the tryers rather than the spectators. Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 3 p 195. Tryers were the judges appointed by the owners

⁸⁴YC 3 May 1743

⁸⁵Cheny 1744

⁸⁶ 13 Geo II c19; 18 Geo II c34

⁸⁷YC 29 Apr 1746, 11, 25 Apr 1749, 25 Jul 1751

⁸⁸YC 1 May 1739

⁸⁹YC 22 Jul 1729 notice for Scarborough races; 8 Apr 1740 Doncaster races

⁹⁰Stakes won at York races in 1712, 1740, Orton 1712, 1740

⁹¹LM 1 Jul 1729, 17 Jun 1730 Methley races and Arthington races

sums involved in Yorkshire varied from £10 to 400 guineas,⁹² but at Newmarket, enormous sums were wagered.

2.1.8 Sweepstakes

These were also privately funded races in which each competitor put up a fixed sum of money, and the winner took all. It was an extension of the match system, and could give a good prize to the winner without each competitor having to stake such a large proportion of the prize as in a match. Moreover, an open race gave greater prestige to the winner against all-comers than a private match winner.⁹³ The conditions of weight, age and distance could be set by the competitors. A sweepstake was run at Middleham in 1727 for 100 guineas put up by each of three competitors so that the winner took 300 guineas.⁹⁴ Few other sweepstakes have been found to be organised in Yorkshire in the early eighteenth century.

2.2 The organisation of the race meetings

Races were organised by interested parties who set out their conditions of entry, and rules by which the races were to be run.

2.2.1 The founders

The people who set up a race and provided the prize were called the founders.⁹⁵ They might be a number of independent gentlemen, like the ones who subscribed for the Kiplingcotes Plate, or the Hambleton Guineas,⁹⁶ or a town corporation e.g. Richmond where the articles were agreed by the mayor and aldermen,⁹⁷ or groups of tradesmen like the Halifax founders.⁹⁸ The reason for the founders setting out articles was to make a binding contract between themselves and the competing horse owners with regard to all aspects of the event; money and reputations were at stake and there have always been people prepared to bend the rules to obtain advantage. The articles usually stated that all competitors were deemed to accept the articles as a condition of entry.⁹⁹ This allowed the founders complete control over the race so that they could at least attempt to prevent fraudulent practices, obtain maximum entertainment for the race patrons and thus maximum benefit for the providers of refreshments from the

⁹²Orton p 52; Cheny 1727; Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 51

⁹³Vamplew The turf p 24

⁹⁴Cheny 1727

⁹⁵Kiplingcotes articles in Appendix 1, preamble

⁹⁶Kiplingcotes articles preamble; Benson np

⁹⁷LG 5 Jul 1709; Doncaster Corporation provided prize money from 1703; Hunter vol. 1 p 29

⁹⁸ 300 of the inhabitants of Halifax, said to be innkeepers alehousekeepers and others, entered into a contract to finance horse races at Skirlington in 1737, WYAS Calderdale Misc 325/3,4

⁹⁹New Malton article 3 in Appendix 1

event, as well as to achieve as orderly an event as was possible. The articles always cleverly allowed the founders to provide a prize for the second best horse, with no outlay to themselves by making each competitor contribute towards it.¹⁰⁰

2.2.2 The articles

All race meetings appear to have had their articles, but the documents themselves have not always survived. Fortunately some articles are still in existence including those from Kiplingcotes, Middleham, and New Malton races as well as the articles said to have been instituted by Charles II at Newmarket in 1665. Other features of contemporary race meetings may be gleaned from the newspaper advertisements for races. It is said that the Newmarket articles were the blue print for all of the other articles, but it seems unlikely that any race organisers were so naive that they would not be wise to the methods of cheating and the means of prevention. The Newmarket articles are unusual in that they state that no serving man or groom was allowed to ride; this condition has not been noted elsewhere except in the earliest Yorkshire Royal Plates. The extant sets of articles from Yorkshire indicate that the races were organised with a thoroughness that might be expected of the lawyers, politicians, justices and wealthy landowners who were nominally responsible for setting up the races, including the Earl of Burlington, Sir William Strickland, William Osbaldeston and representatives of every prominent family in the county. These articles are reproduced in Appendix 1. The factors mentioned in newspaper advertisements in the York Courant imply that similar regulations were applicable at many Yorkshire and other northern race meetings, and it was normally stated that the full articles would be available, either at the time and place where the horses were entered for the race, or at the racecourse, and that entry to the race was conditional upon acceptance of these. Where owners sent a representative to enter a horse, then this person must produce written acceptance by the owner, of any articles.¹⁰¹

Most race meetings were organised for commercial purposes, but there were at least two notable exceptions i.e. the Kiplingcotes race and the Hambleton Subscription Guineas. The Kiplingcotes race was set up as an endowed race with no commercial aspects, to be run in perpetuity.¹⁰² The Hambleton Subscription Guineas race was a less permanent event; this race was probably not an annual fixture, but was regularly organised as a short term subscription, over a few years at a time, e.g. in 1749 a three year contract was entered into.¹⁰³ No advertisements have been found in the early eighteenth century newspapers to promote either

¹⁰⁰ Kiplingcotes article 8

¹⁰¹ New Malton article 3

¹⁰² Indeed, it is still run almost 350 years later, under the same articles. The money collected for the prize was securely invested and is still available

¹⁰³ Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 52

of these races; they were set up and organised by the gentry and owners for themselves; however, anyone with the stake money, was able to enter. Other race meetings were usually advertised, and the costs paid by the organisers.¹⁰⁴ Advertising was essential to commercially sponsored races because the main object of the event was to attract as many competitors as possible. One of the articles regarding entry to the commercially sponsored races almost always stated that the horses should be lodged for several days at stables or inns which had contributed to the race prize fund that year.¹⁰⁵ The Malton articles for 1713 do not specify that the horses had to be stabled in the town, but they did have to be there to be shown and entered five days before the race day, and in the days when horses had to be walked everywhere, it would probably not have been worthwhile, or good for the horses, to return home and be brought back to New Malton again in time for the races. Later advertisements for New Malton races make stabling in the town a particular, rather than implied condition of entry. In most other respects the commercial and non-commercial races had similar articles which appear to have been a satisfactory arrangement and acceptable to all parties. A comparison of the Kiplingcotes articles, (compiled c. 1669) and the many conditions set out for races in the middle of the following century shows that little change took place. The Kiplingcotes rules remain constant and still cannot be altered, but all other races were less permanently financed, perhaps just for one year, and so their articles could be composed annually, to suit the wishes of the subsequent organisers. The race organisers were responsible for the funding and organisation of the race, the prevention of fraudulent practices, and resolving disputes between the contestants. The articles were not usually available in printed form e.g. in the newspapers but they were always shown to competitors when they formally entered for the race.¹⁰⁶ Although each group of race organisers formulated their own articles, they usually followed a similar pattern, viz:

- a. The basic arrangements of place, date, and time
- b. A minimum number of competitors
- c. An official was appointed and named to act as clerk of the course, and his duties and remuneration clearly defined
- d. Financial arrangements, entry and stabling procedure
- e. Type of horse and weight to be carried
- f. Distance, number of heats and route to be run
- g. Prevention of fraudulent practice and rough riding
- h. Resolving disputes

¹⁰⁴This cost 6/- in 1700. Duke of Rutland, Manuscripts of the Duke of Rutland HMC vol. 4 (London 1908) p 558

¹⁰⁵YC 7 Aug 1739

¹⁰⁶YC Yarm 12 Sep 1732. A set of articles called the Worksoop Articles were printed at York in 1666 and included details of stimulants that were banned. Prior, Early records p 110

a. Place, date, and time

The competitors needed to know exactly where and when the meeting would be held. Arrangements had to be made to train the horses, riders had to be engaged, and in many cases the journey to the race site had to be planned, and accommodation arranged. A race meeting might be arranged up to a year in advance to allow for advertising and word to be spread amongst owners so that the maximum number of competing horses could be attracted, and owners given time to make arrangements. The times of starting races varied a little, depending on the place and time of year; Kiplingcotes, held in March when days are short, was arranged to start before 2pm,¹⁰⁷ whereas by April, a race at Bishop Burton was set to commence between 3 and 4 p.m.¹⁰⁸ Competitors needed to be certain that there were firm arrangements to hold a race meeting before they would select that meeting rather than another, or lay out money to send a horse to it.

b. Minimum number of competitors

Most horse races were usually financed by interested parties who hoped to make a profit out of the ancillary features of the event by providing refreshments or accommodation or by stabling the horses. If it became clear that insufficient genuine race horses had entered to make the race viable or entertaining, then the founders might feel that their outlay was not justified, and so the race articles usually specified the minimum number of entries for a race.¹⁰⁹ This was usually at least three horses or the race would not be run.¹¹⁰ However, the articles also provided compensation to repay the expenses of people who had entered a race that was later cancelled. A payment of about one third of the prize value was given to an owner if he were the only entrant, or if two entered, this sum was divided between them.¹¹¹ The Kiplingcotes race was independently financed and so there was no minimum number of competitors

c. Appointment and duties of the clerk of the course

A man was named as the clerk of the course; he was responsible for writing up the list of competitors, taking the entry stakes, checking the certificates of the horses' age or status as a hunter, and measuring the horses, depending on the requirements of the race as well as weighing the riders before and after the races. He, or his appointee, was also responsible for starting the race. The remuneration for this post was usually set as a small sum to be paid by

¹⁰⁷Kiplingcotes articles

¹⁰⁸YC 25 Mar 1740

¹⁰⁹YC 6 Feb 1739

¹¹⁰Yarm required four horses YC 22 Aug 1738

¹¹¹YC 6 Feb 1739; Pontefract articles allowed for one fifth of the prize to be paid

each competitor upon entering, and varied from around 1/- to 5/- per horse.¹¹² The clerk at Kiplingcotes also received 15/- from the winner. Amongst the responsibilities of the clerk were the preparation and maintenance of the course, the route guide posts, and the care of the weights;¹¹³ he also collected the fees paid by the vendors of refreshments, and ensured that they left the land in good condition.¹¹⁴ The founders effectively made the clerk responsible for many of the financial and administrative arrangements of the race, including his own remuneration.

d. Financial arrangements, entry and stabling procedure

The value of the winner's prize was stated clearly, although occasionally the full sum was not paid out. A payment called stakes, usually between five shillings and four pounds, was required from all entries to the race; this sum was always considerably reduced for those founders who entered. The stakes were to be paid at the time of entering the race, usually a few days before the race day, but exceptionally, at Wetherby, competitors were allowed to pay at the start of the race, but they were charged double for this concession.¹¹⁵ The sum raised from the stakes was invariably awarded to the second best horse; if a large number of horses entered for a race, then it was possible for the second horse to win a larger sum than the first past the post. This could lead to corruption if owners entered for monetary rather than kudos factors, but the fact that little evidence of this exists suggests that the cash reward was not a prime consideration. Occasionally, the winning horses were required to pay towards the prize for the following year, thus reducing the true value of the prize.¹¹⁶ The horses were required to be produced at a specific time and place so that the clerk could take details of the owner's name, sometimes the rider's name, and the colours he would be wearing, as well as a brief description of the horse. The articles for the 1702 Yorkshire Royal Plate specified that only gentlemen were to ride, and so a rider would have to show proof of identity if a stranger; but by 1707, grooms were also permitted.¹¹⁷ If the founders did not want a particular rider or owner at their event then this person would be refused entry by the articles. No horse that was owned by, or had ever been owned by a Mr Parsons of Micklefield was allowed to race at Methley Coney Moor races in 1730, and from 1742, New Malton banned the jockey Stephen Jefferson from winning any prize there for several years.¹¹⁸ The height of the horses was accurately

¹¹²New Malton articles 9

¹¹³Kiplingcotes articles 9

¹¹⁴YC 3 Apr 1739 New Malton

¹¹⁵YC 1 Aug 1748

¹¹⁶YC 3 May 1743 Beverley

¹¹⁷LG 10 Aug 1702, 26 Jun 1707

¹¹⁸LM 1 Sep 1730. This is the earliest printed notice found of an owner being excluded. YC 9 Mar 1742, and 29 Apr 1746 are the earliest examples of a jockey being banned from a course. YC 25 Jun 1751 shows that horses owned by a Mr Trimmer were banned from racing at Richmond, Doncaster, Yarm and Wakefield with a similar notice in YC 18 Aug 1752

measured, because in some races a handicapping system existed which allowed smaller horses to carry less weight.¹¹⁹ Other handicap races allowed younger horses to carry smaller weights,¹²⁰ or entry was limited to horses of particular ages, and in these cases the clerk demanded to be shown a certificate from the breeder to prove the age of the animal.¹²¹ The horses were generally required to be stabled in the town at premises that had subscribed a minimum sum towards the race prizes, usually ten shillings and six pence and where many contributors were expected, a maximum of four horses per establishment was allowed, or the horses were divided between the establishments.¹²² Only founders were exempted from this condition, which of course brought revenue into the town.¹²³

e. Type of horse and weight to be carried

There was, with the exception of Kiplingcotes, where any horse was free to enter, usually a restriction on the type of horse that could enter a race. This could be sex, age, height, past form, value, classification as a hunter, or occasionally the status of the owner. A race especially for mares was sponsored by the Crown at Black Hambleton to encourage breeders to improve the bloodlines of their brood mares.¹²⁴ The Black Hambleton Royal Plate was a valuable and prestigious race and attracted entries from a wide area, but many less wealthy meetings were unable to attract sufficient entries from one specific category, and so races were devised by the founders to attract any available horses. This led to races for horses of mixed ages or heights where the horses were handicapped with weights in order to make a fairer and more interesting race. In these cases, small horses, called galloways, were allowed to carry less weight than taller horses, and younger horses carried less weight than older, stronger horses. The races were described as 'give and take', or 'weight for inches', and were very popular. The scale of handicaps was entirely at the discretion of the founders, but a common one was that horses 13 hands high carried 7 stones, and for every extra 1/8 inch in height an extra 14 ounces was added, so that horses 14 hands carried 9 stones, and 15 hands carried 11 stones e.g. at Knaresborough races in 1730 galloways of 14 hands carried 9 stones weight, and taller and shorter horses more or less weight,¹²⁵ but at Yarm, 14 hands horses carried 10

when a Mr. Lingard was banned from entering horses at Wakefield the following year. The earliest example of a jockey or owner being publicly banned was said by Prior to be in the 1770 racing calendar. Prior Calendar p 150

¹¹⁹Prior, Calendar p 98

¹²⁰YC 17 May 1746 Beverley races

¹²¹YC 22 Jul 1729 Scarborough races

¹²²YC 13 Mar 1740

¹²³YC 29 Apr 1746

¹²⁴LG 23 Jun 1709

¹²⁵YC 9 Jun 1730

stones, with others carrying more or less according to their height.¹²⁶ The smallest horses appear to have run at Methley races in 1738 when a race was set up for ponies of 12 1/2 hands.¹²⁷ Races could be restricted to horses that had not previously won above a stated amount, so that owners would not refuse to enter a race because they knew that one or more successful horses would be running.¹²⁸ The weight for age system appeared in 1740 as a result of the legislation that forced racehorses to carry a minimum weight according to their age.¹²⁹ This effectively excluded smaller horses from racing as the proscribed weights were too great a handicap for them, and so instead of mixed height races, the founders of races opted for mixed age races. Before 1740, in races where age had been a consideration as an entry qualification, these races had usually been for horses of a maximum given age, as maturity is a factor in a horse's racing ability. After 1740, many race articles stipulated that younger horses would be allowed a weight advantage in age races e.g. aged horses i.e. those over six years of age, should carry 12 stones, whilst six year olds carried 11 stones and other articles required that five year olds should carry 10 stones which was in accordance with the legislation.¹³⁰

Other events were limited to horses that had never won a particular sum at one time e.g. ten pounds,¹³¹ or were worth a particular sum; sometimes the founders could buy the winning horse for a small sum upon demand.¹³² Races for hunters were organised, and the owner had to certify that the horse was a reputed hunter, or swear an oath to this effect.¹³³ The hunters races added particular interest to a meeting because the jockeys were often gentleman riders, and so the gentry patrons could certainly be expected on that day, as well as the holiday crowd who probably hoped to see a few falls.¹³⁴ A requirement of a genuine hunter was that it should be able to race whilst carrying a man of average weight as it would in the hunting field, and so the weight for hunters' races was usually set at 12 stones which allowed most gentlemen who fancied their skill as a jockey to enter a race without giving much advantage of weight away to the professionals, although many hunters races were specifically for gentleman riders.¹³⁵

¹²⁶YC 12 Sep 1732

¹²⁷LM 12 Sep 1738

¹²⁸YC 12 Sep 1732 Yarm

¹²⁹13 Geo II c19

¹³⁰YC 10 Aug 1742

¹³¹YC 7 Aug 1739 Pontefract

¹³²LG 20 Jun 1710

¹³³YC 23 May 1732, 29 Apr 1740; LG 23 Aug 1708 Nunnington

¹³⁴Orton p 19

¹³⁵Orton p 29

Occasionally the residents of a town would arrange to have one race at a meeting especially for themselves, and entry was restricted to horses owned by freemen of the place.¹³⁶ A prize was donated at Methley races by a local landowner, Charles Savile, specifically for horses owned by his tenants for the past six months in 1730.¹³⁷

f. Distance, heats and route

The founders declared in the articles what distance a race was to be run over, and how many times round the course this would be, so that there could be no dispute or confusion. A few races were run in just one heat and so would be over quickly, like Kiplingcotes, but most were designed to provide a whole afternoon of entertainment for the spectators, and so three or four heats were specified, with half an hour in between to allow the horses a short rest and have the sweat rubbed off them so that they would not be chilled and less fit to run.¹³⁸ By means of running four heats, the founders could provide entertainment over a period of almost four hours, and only have to pay for one prize. The distance and route to be taken in the race was clearly specified in the case of very rural courses like Middleham in 1715.¹³⁹ Even the side of the posts that the horses were to run was specified.¹⁴⁰

g. Prevention of fraudulent practice

The frauds to which horse racing was open were numerous; not only was the current prize at stake, but so were those in the future. A horse known to have won a large prize would be automatically ineligible to enter for some races that specified horses that had never won a certain sum, but there was no effective means of checking up on the ownership or identity of a horse that belonged to a stranger, particularly at small meetings. Occasionally races were specifically for horses owned by freemen or residents of the town and this was easily ascertained, but it was usually stated that the horse should have been the freeman's property for a certain time prior to the race to prevent unfair dealings or borrowing horses.¹⁴¹ The heights of horses were checked by the clerk of the course who made the horse stand on a special stone whilst being measured; this stone was 6 ft 4 in by 3 ft 3 in, with indentations for the horses feet to be placed in during measurement. This was to prevent the fraudulent practice whereby some horses were trained to splay their legs when the measuring rod was placed on their backs; this effectively reduced their height, and would have allowed them to

¹³⁶YC 20 May 1746 Beverley

¹³⁷LM 1 Sep 1730

¹³⁸New Malton articles

¹³⁹LG 13 Aug 1715

¹⁴⁰New Malton articles

¹⁴¹YC 20 May 1746

carry less weight.¹⁴² Certificates from the breeder of a horse to prove its age were demanded at most courses where age was a qualification for a race. If a horse's age was falsified then that horse could be banned forever from that course, and possibly, the owner might be banned as well.¹⁴³ All horses had to be produced in public at the stated time of entry so that they could be scrutinised by anyone concerned; this was often several days in advance of the race and the horse was stabled at specified places which must have reduced the possibility of switching. The clerk of the course wrote down in his book the colour and any distinguishing markings on the horse at entering and checked that the same horse actually ran to prevent the entry of a better horse on the day perhaps after bets had been laid. Owners were usually only allowed to enter one horse per race;¹⁴⁴ this prevented one person being certain of winning either the first or second prize in a race where only three horses entered, or two horses running to disadvantage others on the course, or someone entering a horse simply to make up the minimum number. Jockeys were weighed before the race and after each heat. Any jockey who dismounted before reaching the weighing scales or whose weight decreased by more than one pound was disqualified to ensure that the correct weight was carried in all heats and for the whole race.¹⁴⁵ Jockeys' names were given to the clerk at the entry to make sure that previously banned men could not ride; the colours they were to wear were also noted to make it easier for the judges to differentiate between the horses. The articles at some courses sought to stop fights and cheating during the race when feelings were high, by stating that riders who jostled or used their whips on other riders etc. would be disqualified, so would owners who impeded the progress of other horses.¹⁴⁶ Sometimes the founders could buy the winning horse for a small sum upon demand, which stopped owners lying about their animal's value; this type of race encouraged numbers of ordinary men to race their horses rather than the wealthy winning every race, and may have been a precursor to the 'selling races'.¹⁴⁷ To discourage people from entering valuable race horses in the hunters' race at York, the articles stated that a condition of entry was that the winning horse could be bought by any of the founders for £50, or raffled between them if more than one wanted it.¹⁴⁸ At Rotherham, the value of horses entered in hunters' races was not supposed to exceed ten pounds, and at Beverley, five pounds.¹⁴⁹ This

¹⁴²Prior Calendar p 98

¹⁴³YC 29 May 1739 Hambleton

¹⁴⁴YC 7 Aug 1739 Pontefract

¹⁴⁵Kiplingcotes articles

¹⁴⁶Royal Plate articles and Kiplingcotes articles

¹⁴⁷LG 20 Jun 1710

¹⁴⁸YC 21 Aug 1739

¹⁴⁹YC 29 Apr 1740; 3 May 1743

was to make the race a fair test of hunters. Any horse that ran on the wrong side of the posts and thus cut corners or took the wrong route was automatically disqualified.¹⁵⁰

h. Resolving disputes

In races where heats were run, it was quite possible for each heat to be won by a different horse and so the articles had to contain a clause to decide on a system of rules in case this occurred. It was usually stated that if three different horses won each of the first three heats, then only these three should run for the last heat and if one horse won the first three heats then it should have the prize. Similarly, when awarding the stakes, or second prize, the fourth heat could be used to decide this. In races where three heats were advertised to be run a horse that won two heats need not run in the third heat which would count towards the stakes or second prize; this was a rule of the Royal Plates.¹⁵¹ Those founders who were present made the final decision in all disputes.¹⁵² The Royal Plates races were run according to the King's rules and orders as interpreted by Sir William Strickland, the Earl of Carlisle, or his deputy.¹⁵³ York and Hambleton races were declared to be run under the rules for the Royal Plates and at Beverley certain local rules were made in addition to the Royal articles.¹⁵⁴

Summary

The people who owned and bred racehorses did so to in order to win races, either for the prize money stud fees, winnings from wagering, or prestige. Whatever each person's purpose in racing was, there usually had to be a demonstrable prize, and the greater its value the more desirable it was to them. In order to attract the best horses that would provide the most exciting entertainment, the race organisers needed to offer a valuable prize, and this had to be paid for. The Crown paid for one or two annual Royal Plates in Yorkshire, which were amongst the most valuable prizes of the day, in order to encourage strong horses to be bred, but most race meetings had to be self-financing. Local gentlemen with an interest in racing often subscribed a guinea or so annually towards some races, for which they were allowed a reduced entry fee for any horse that they entered, but some contributed merely as supporters of the event, and owners of large estates occasionally gave a whole prize. It was rare for a race to be funded in perpetuity, but for the Kiplingcotes race, the local gentry collected a sum of money that was invested so that it would provide a prize, and this race is still run annually more than 300 years after it was first endowed. Members of Parliament were expected to contribute relatively large sums to sweeten the electorate for the next poll if they wanted to be returned.

¹⁵⁰New Malton articles

¹⁵¹YC 3 May 1743

¹⁵²Kiplingcotes articles

¹⁵³LG 24 Jun 1710; YC 29 May 1739

¹⁵⁴YC 12 Apr 1748

There was no way that gate money could be collected from the spectators, as most racecourses were on common land, so an indirect method was used to raise money. Those traders who could benefit from the race meeting were persuaded to contribute by paying rent for booths to supply refreshments on the course, and only those inns and stables that contributed a fixed sum to the races were allowed to provide livery for the competing horses. All of these conditions were strictly enforced by the race organisers who were often local corporations interested in bringing trade to a district. Corporations provided a few prizes themselves, but it may have been a risky business to use public funds in this way if no profit was made, and so most prize monies were derived from the gentry, or commercial interests. The underhand method of forcing a winner to contribute towards the following year's race and thus accept a prize of less than the advertised and legal minimum was effectively stopped by law. Surprisingly, the sweepstake method of financing a race was not used regularly in Yorkshire until later in the eighteenth century. Matches were arranged regularly, but the financial arrangements for these was a private matter between the owners.

The source of funding was usually stated in the race articles which were tailored to suit the circumstances and finances of individual meetings with regard to the intentions of the founders as to whether the race was to provide a sporting competition for all-comers or to encourage trade in a town. It was essential to state clearly in the articles what type of horses were eligible to enter as well as the weight to be carried, and the distance and number of heats that were to be run; by entering the race all competitors were deemed to have accepted the articles. The organisers closed every possible loophole for cheats that they could think of, including a clause that allowed the founders to arbitrate in any dispute.

The organisers of commercially sponsored races had to put on a programme of races that would appeal to owners, and crowds of spectators so that the maximum benefit would be reaped by the sponsors, whilst a purely sporting event could be run to provide an entertainment mainly for the gentry. The event required the appointment of an able administrator who would be responsible for the day to day organisation of racing and who would ensure that the articles were enforced. The articles formed a contract between the owners and the founders so that the obligations of each party were publicly specified and were designed to allow the race meetings to be run as impartially and honourably as was possible. Clearly set out race articles were essential both to fair play in racing, and to obtaining value for the prize money, whatever its source.

CHAPTER 3

THE YORKSHIRE HORSE-RACING CALENDAR

In somer time at Whitsuntyde
When knights most on horseback ryde;
A course let them make on a daye,
Steedes and palfreyse, for to assaye;
Which horse, that best may run,
Three miles the course was then,
Who that might ride him shoulde
Have forty pounds of redy gold...¹

The dates selected by the race organisers to hold their events are unlikely to have been randomly chosen; similarly the decision about which day or days of the week to have the races must have been taken with regard to meeting the needs of those people for whose benefit the races were run. This chapter examines the days of the week, and the dates when race meetings were held, to discover the reasons for the arrangements.

3.1 The significance of the days of the week when races were held

Introduction

A study of the dates when races were held has shown that race meetings were dependant upon the time of the year, and that many were held in conjunction with holidays and fairs, but as some of these events took place over a period of several days, it is apparent that extra factors must have governed the specific days of the week when the races were run. Certain religious, commercial and social elements of people's day-to-day lives would have influenced the selection of race days, and this section investigates the frequency with which races were held on each of the days of the week, and the possible reasons for the popularity, or unpopularity of individual days for the groups of people involved.

Before the Industrial Revolution, for many working people, there was no regular pattern to the working week, particularly for workers employed in dual occupations, where one person worked at two part-time jobs, or a few weeks at one, then another occupation.² Many people were able to choose the hours and days that they worked, and thus could determine their own level of income and leisure time. The putting out system that was a common feature of many cottage

¹ Legend of Sir Bevis Quoted by Mortimer p 1

²B.A. Holderness, Pre-industrial England: economy and society 1500-1750 (London 1976) pp 1-3

industries like the metal and textile working trades demanded fetching, carrying and waiting for materials, and lent itself to irregular days and hours, so that in all workshops men could work at their own pace, and choose when to work. The working day could be lengthened or shortened to fit in with labour patterns over a week or a fortnight; it was aptly described by E.P.Thompson as:

The work pattern was one of alternate bouts of intense labour and of idleness wherever men were in control of their own working lives.³

In other industries, like building or weaving, the vagaries of the English weather regularly disrupted the working week.⁴ Although increased leisure might result in reduced income, it has been argued that at times when people earned more, then they could better afford to indulge themselves in leisure pursuits like going to the races. This must be particularly relevant at times when wages were better, such as at, or just after harvest time.⁵ The gentry, who owned the racehorses also had their own preferences for race days, and so the race organisers had to satisfy both classes of race goers to achieve a satisfactory result.

Method

Figures 3 and 4 have been produced to show the number horse races held on each day of the week, with separate totals for the races at York and Hambleton combined, and for the rest of the Yorkshire courses. York and Hambleton have been grouped together as a joint fixture, because after 1711 when York became the regular venue for one Royal Plate, and Hambleton, the usual venue for another Royal Plate, these two fixtures were arranged in harmony, so that the Hambleton race was held on the Saturday and York races commenced on the following Monday with the other Yorkshire Royal Plate. Both events relied upon the York Assizes' social season for much of their support. The occurrence of the race days has been collated from newspapers, racing calendars, and contemporary writings, but as many notices of races do not indicate the week day, only the date, these days have been determined using Cheney's Handbook.⁶ Figure 3 shows the days of the week when race meetings took place in Yorkshire from March 1700 to 24 June 1740, the date when the Act of Parliament that forbade most races when the prize was less than £50 came into force.⁷ Figure 4 shows the days of the week when races took place after the 1740 Act became law, until the end of 1749.

³E.P.Thompson 'Time,work discipline, and industrial capitalism', Past and Present Dec 1962 vol. 38 pp 56-97 p 73

⁴Thompson, Time,work discipline p 71

⁵W.Vamplew, Pay up and play the game, professional sport in Britain 1875-1914 (Cambridge 1988) pp 21-24

⁶C.R. Cheney, ed., Handbook of dates for students of English history (London 1978)

⁷13 Geo II c 19. This Act forbade races where the prize was less than £50, except for races where the prize money came from a pre-endowed source like a rent charge; matches, except at Black Hambleton and Newmarket were also made illegal.

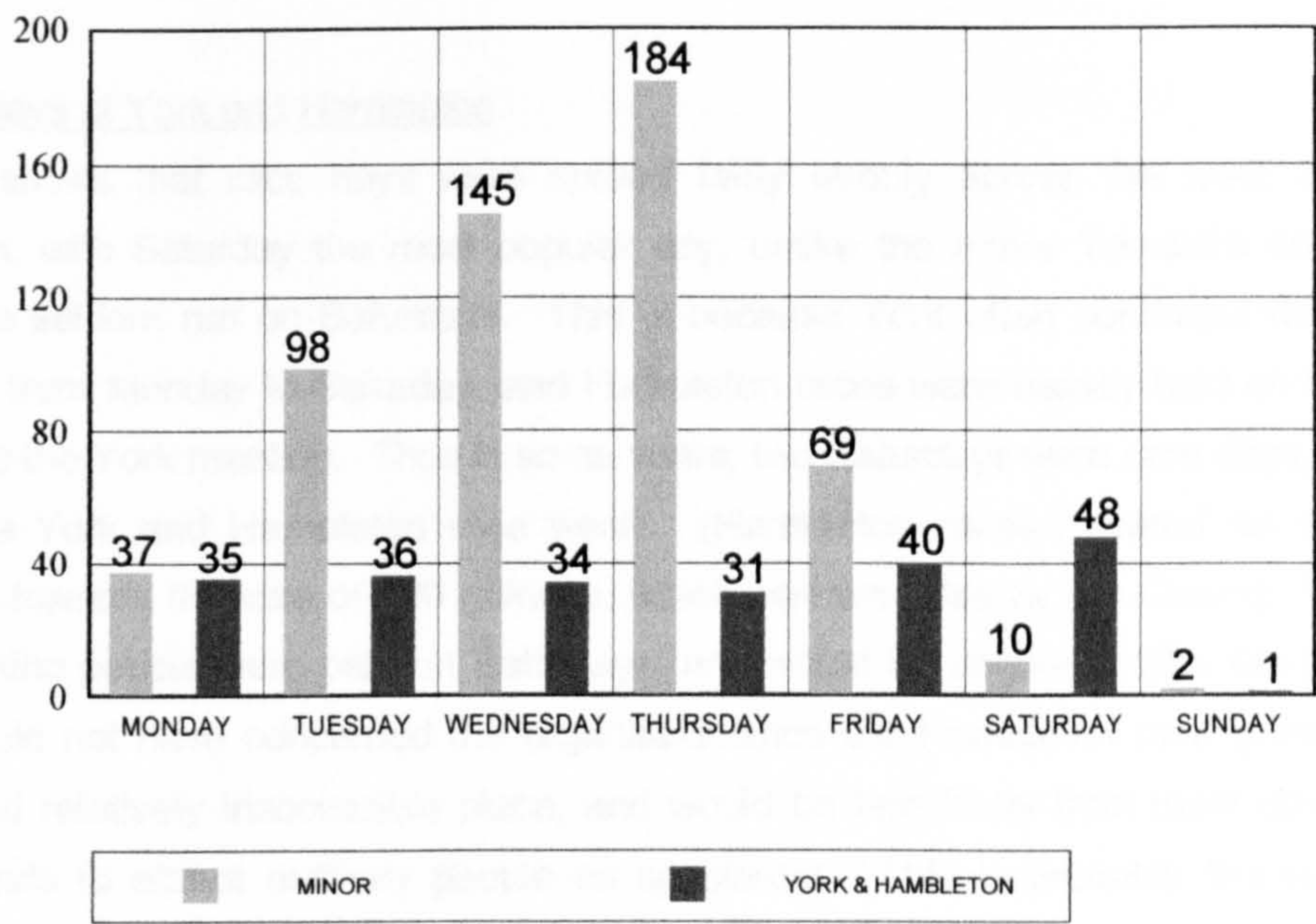


FIGURE 3
RACING DAYS IN YORKSHIRE FROM 1700 TO THE ACT OF 1740.

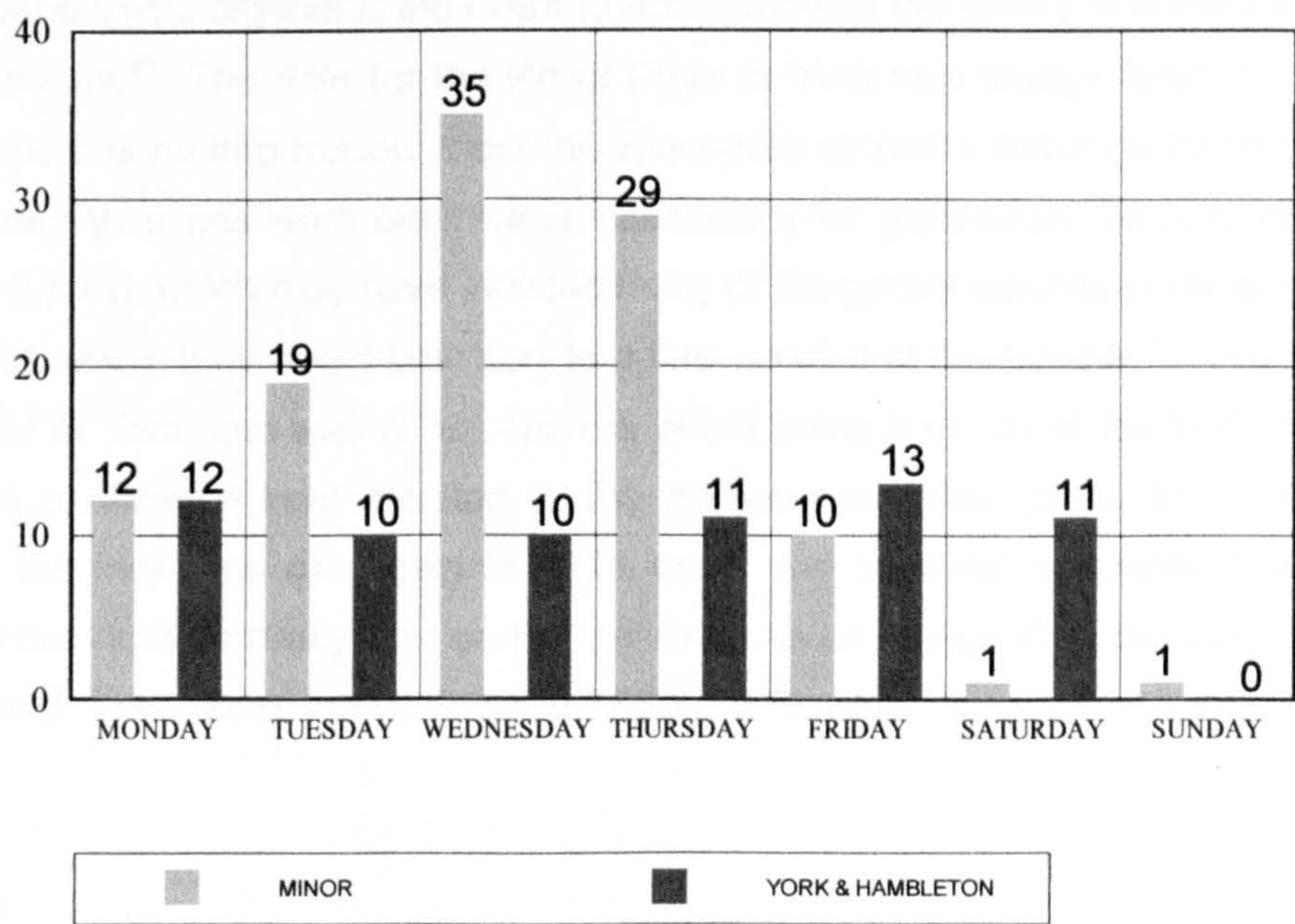


FIGURE 4
RACING DAYS IN YORKSHIRE FOLLOWING THE ACT OF 1740

3.1.1 Race days before the 1740 Act

a. Races days at York and Hambleton

Figure 3 shows that race days were spread fairly evenly across the week at York and Hambleton, with Saturday the most popular day, unlike the minor Yorkshire courses where races were seldom run on Saturdays. This is because York often continued its programme every day from Monday to Saturday, and Hambleton races were usually held on the Saturday previous to the York meeting. Thus in some years, two Saturdays were race days, one at each end of the York and Hambleton race week. (Hambleton races required no subsidy from spectators towards its prize of 100 guineas, which was provided by the Crown) The fact that many working people were paid on Saturdays, and would be unable to take the day off to go racing would not have concerned the organisers since the Hambleton race ground was in a remote and relatively inaccessible place, and would be less likely than most other Yorkshire race grounds to attract ordinary people as spectators. This is probably the reason for its specific exemption from the Act of 1740.⁸ It is also possible that the gentry tried to discourage casual crowds from attending the Hambleton event in the same way that the races at Newmarket were kept exclusively for the racehorse owners and their friends. There is evidence that there has always been a section of society who tried to restrict certain sporting occasions to the upper classes.⁹ In the case of the Hambleton Royal Plate, the Saturday race day was selected by the Master of the Queen's Stud, and the Earl of Carlisle, members of the Royal Household who organised the event to accommodate the gentry who were at York for the Summer Assizes.¹⁰ The date for the Royal Plate at York was always fixed for the following Monday. There is no information about the spectators at York's Saturday fixtures; these were not held every year and were often races specifically for gentleman riders to race their own hunters for a prize, which may have induced many of the gentry families to remain in York over the weekend, where they would then stay to attend service at the Minster.¹¹ One race was run on a Sunday at York, and was an exceptional event being a re-run of the York Royal Plate of 1714, when a disputed heat resulted in the parties concerned taking the matter to court. Eventually the race was run again in 1719 under the personal supervision of the Earl of Carlisle, whose horse actually won on this occasion, even though Carlisle had not entered for the 1714 race! The date given by Orton is 19 July, a Sunday.¹²

⁸13 Geo II c 19

⁹Vamplew, The turf p 18; Vamplew Pay up p 26 cites T.S.Henricks, 'Sport and social hierarchy in medieval England', Journal of Sports History vol. 9 1982 pp 20-37

¹⁰CTB vol. 26 pp 357, 468; L.G. 24 Jun 1708

¹¹Orton pp 14-52

¹²Orton pp 4, 10

b. Races at the minor courses

Sundays

Sundays were not generally race days in eighteenth century Yorkshire. It would have been a convenient and profitable day for a social occasion, but for religious, and underlying political reasons, all forms of merriment were actively prohibited on Sundays all over England. It was only at the Reformation that England adopted the fourth of the Ten Commandments: 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.'¹³ The Protestant theology of that time stressed the importance of Sunday observance in distinction to the Catholic Church's attachment to saint's days and festivals, which were effectively abolished, and Sundays were designated as work-free days. However, the authorities were determined that this regular weekly holiday should not be allowed to develop into an occasion for revelry, and so banned many sports and recreations.¹⁴

Later, under the legislation of 1625, people were not allowed to assemble anywhere but in their own parish for any form of sport, even as spectators.¹⁵ An Act of 1627 forbade certain travel for trade on Sundays;¹⁶ this Act was enforced by similar legislation in 1677 which remained in force until 1780,¹⁷ and all gambling was specifically forbidden on Sundays from 1703.¹⁸ Under these circumstances, it is surprising to find any races run on Sundays, but between 1715 and 1738 there was said to be a gradual disregard of the Sunday Observance and trading laws, which resulted in a relaxation of the prosecutions under this legislation.¹⁹ Races in the London area in the early eighteenth century were commented on in the Daily Journal and the Gentleman's Magazine.²⁰ The three Sunday races found in Yorkshire, like the others reported in London, were probably not conventional race meetings that involved large numbers of spectators in drinking and gambling, nor was any outside funding required. The first Yorkshire

¹³The Bible, Exodus XX verse 8

¹⁴I. Bradley, 'The English Sunday' History Today vol. 22 (1972) pp 355-363

¹⁵1 Car I c1

¹⁶3 Car c 1

¹⁷29 Car II c 7. Bradley p 358 states that this Act specifically forbade 'any drover, horse-courser, waggoner...' from travelling or arriving at an inn on the Lord's Day. In fact, the Act does not mention horse-courers. W.B. Whitaker, The eighteenth-century English Sunday (London 1940) p 13 states that the Act removed any protection under the law for travellers who might be robbed on Sundays. This seems unlikely.

¹⁸ By proclamation of Queen Anne, quoted in Whitaker p 35

¹⁹Whitaker pp 52-53; GM vol. 8 p 110, reported in 1738 that the Aldermen of London had recently given orders to enforce the Sunday Observance laws.

²⁰Whitaker quotes the GM vol. I p 27 for 1731, when a match involving Lord Cavendish was reported, but this was not a standard horse race, it involved only one horse running a distance in less than a specified time; it was reported that in excess of £5,000 was wagered upon the event. In fact the horse failed to beat the time, and there was a re-run of the event on the following Sunday. In 1728 the Bishop of London had been so incensed by advertisements in the Daily Journal of two matches to be run on Sunday mornings that he made a complaint to the Justices of London and Middlesex, and the magistrates were commanded to enforce the law, but at least one of these matches still took place and was reported in the Daily Journal of 9 Apr 1728

event was the re-run of the Royal Plate described above, the second was on 9 April 1727 at Middleham when a sweepstake and two matches were run,²¹ and the third was a match at Rotherham on 8 May 1737.²² All of these races may have been considered private events, viewed with a blind eye, especially as the Earl of Carlisle, the Duke of Rutland and Sir William Lowther were involved in the York race, and the Middleham race probably involved most of the local magistrates.²³

Although many horse races were heavily dependent upon the support of the working people, they also required the goodwill of the gentry who often provided the horses. This may have been regarded as a paternalistic duty in providing entertainment for the community, but is more likely to have been to further their own interest in any wagering that will have resulted.²⁴ It would have been possible to have races with farmers' animals, but these races would have been rather colourless, and perhaps seen as less honest without the gentry's presence. Good quality equine competitors would have made the races more prestigious, exciting, and spectacular. Races that were not sanctioned by the local gentry may not have been so well tolerated by the authorities, and this may be the reason for few races being reported on Sundays, as the local gentry and clergy would be unlikely to encourage the working people to go racing on Sundays, even if they condoned it within their own class. At the end of the seventeenth century, some magistrates were said to have been shamed by the established church into applying the laws against Sunday labour and travel.²⁵ Parishes were allowed to celebrate the dedication of their churches by holding a parish feast or wake, and these were held all over the country, at least from the eighteenth century. They were occasions for local entertainment and pleasure when the religious elements were taken care of on the Sunday and the sports and secular diversions were deferred to the following Monday.²⁶

Mondays

There is a marked variation in the days when races were held at the minor courses. As many races were indirectly dependant on the spectators for financing the prizes then it would be essential to arrange for the races to be run at a time when the largest number of spectators would be sure to attend.²⁷ This may have varied from area to area, but this survey has found

²¹ Cheny 1727

²² Cheny 1737

²³ Messrs. Hutton, Pierse and Carr were amongst the participants.

²⁴ Vamplew Pay up p 26; Malcolmson, Popular recreations pp 34-51

²⁵ D. Brailsford Sport and society, Elizabeth to Anne (London 1969) pp 149-150

²⁶ GM 1738 vol. 8 pp 465, 522-523

²⁷ Vamplew The turf p 18

that in Yorkshire, Mondays were the least popular weekday for horse races to be run. Only 6.8 % (37) of races were held on Mondays. In many English towns and villages, Monday was regularly taken as a holiday by the better paid working men who were usually craftsmen;²⁸ it was usually spent drinking, and became well known in the second half of the eighteenth century as 'Saint Monday'. Agricultural labourers had no Saint Monday, as their conditions of work were quite rigid compared with those of the artisans who were paid by the piece.²⁹ Mondays have been found by Brailsford to have been very popular for boxing and cricket,³⁰ which were probably organised by the same publicans who sponsored the horse races, but Figure 3 suggests that 'Saint Monday' was not the patron saint of Yorkshire horse racing, as few Yorkshire towns held their races on Mondays. Public houses were the social centres of many communities, and were often the only source of organised entertainment, which might be animal fighting, music and dancing, or a horse race; these activities would be arranged in order to attract customers who would purchase food and drink, to be consumed during these diversions.³¹ It seems that the publicans had plenty of customers on Mondays, but it may have been in their interest to drum up trade at other times during the week by sponsoring horse racing. The people who provided food and drink were probably the largest group that made its living out of this form of leisure activity.³²

It has been suggested that Sundays were commonly used to walk the horses to the courses for Monday races, and that some races were deliberately held on Tuesdays or Wednesdays to allow more time for the horses to arrive at the race towns,³³ but this is improbable since the advertisements for most races specify that the horses had to be stabled in the town for between two and nine days before the race day. Two places, Bishop Burton and Methley, where the races began on a Monday, specified that the horses were to be in the villages on the Saturday before the races,³⁴ and the horses running at York in the Monday races, were to be stabled there not later than the previous Wednesday.³⁵ This widespread condition of entry to the races was formulated to allow the local innkeepers to recoup their investment in the race prizes, as

²⁸ Thompson Time work discipline p 72 describes the framework knitting and shoemaking tradesmen as some of the greatest followers of Saint Monday

²⁹ Thompson Time work discipline p 76

³⁰ Brailsford 'Religion and sport in eighteenth century England' BJSH vol. 1 no 2 1984 pp 166-183

³¹ W. Vamplew, 'The sport of kings and commoners: the commercialisation of British horse-racing in the nineteenth century' in C. Cashman & M. McKernan, eds., Sport in History: the making of modern sporting history (St. Lucia 1979) pp 307-325; Vamplew Pay up p 26; R. Malcolmson, 'Sports in society: a historical perspective' BJSH vol. 1 no 1 1983 pp 60-72

³² Very few people were able to make a living out of leisure. Vamplew Pay up p 29

³³ Brailsford, Religion and sport in eighteenth century England pp 166-183; Brailsford, Sport, time, and society p 80

³⁴ Y.C. 22 Jul 1729, 4 days at Scarborough; 10 May 1731, 9 days at Beverley; 23 May 1732, 8 days at Doncaster; 6 Feb 1739, 2 days at Bishop Burton; LM 7 May 1723, Methley 2 days; LM, 18 May 1731, Methley 2 days

³⁵ Y.C. 29 May 1739, 5 days

the competing horses were obliged to be stabled for a minimum number of days at named inns, which had contributed fixed amounts of money to the races. It is certain that the groom who accompanied the horse, and perhaps other servants, and the owner might also be accommodated there, thus increasing the inns' profit. The presence in the village of the competing horses, several days prior to the races, guaranteed to the organisers and spectators that sufficient horses to make up the numbers for the races would enter. The arrival and measuring of the horses added to the sense of occasion, and spectators might visit the inns to examine the horses, and spend money there too.

Tuesdays to Thursdays

The number of race days at the minor Yorkshire courses increased steadily from 6.8% (37) on Mondays, to a peak of 33.8% (184) on Thursdays before falling sharply to only 12.7% (10) on Fridays and a mere 1.8% (10) on Saturdays. Tuesdays were responsible for 18% (98) of minor Yorkshire race days. In some parts of England, Tuesday was another non-working day for many people, and was occasionally called 'Saint Tuesday'³⁶, or 'Holy Tuesday'; this custom may have been less popular than 'Saint Monday' in Yorkshire, which would have resulted in the publicans trying to drum up even more business on that day.³⁷ Mondays and Tuesdays have been found to be days for boxing and cricket matches to be organised.³⁸ Wednesdays were more popular for horse racing with 26.6% (145) of race days, but Thursdays, with 33.8% (184) of race days were by far the main days for minor Yorkshire horse races.³⁹ Thursdays obviously also suited some of the gentry horse owners, as when a group of gentlemen set up their own independent race at Kiplingcotes, it was specified to be run always on a Thursday, but the reason for Thursday's popularity is unclear.

Most horse races needed crowds of people to subsidise the prizes and people gathered together at fairs and holidays, which are discussed in section 3.2.3, but another time when large numbers of people met together was on market day. The relationship between market days and horse races has been determined by counting the number of times that the two events coincided. Before 1740, Askrigg, Bradford, Ripon, Scarborough and Yarm were race towns that held markets on Thursdays. Sixteen meetings, (of one to four days in length) were held at these towns, and of these, nine occasions coincided with their Thursday market day.

³⁶Thompson Time work discipline p 72

³⁷Reid Saint Monday p 79; Vamplew Pay up p 31 n47 cites The Oxford English Dictionary: the first written reference to Saint Monday as the Scots Magazine 1753

³⁸R. Holt., Sport and the British: a modern history (Oxford 1992) p 46 cites Brailsford 'Religion and sport in eighteenth century England' pp 166-183, to show that horse racing was also popular on Mondays. Table 3 shows that this was not so in Yorkshire at this time.

³⁹Brailsford has found that Tuesdays and Wednesdays were the most popular days for horse racing, and that the number of days then declined, with only occasional meetings on Fridays, and that Saturday meetings were rare in the eighteenth century. Brailsford Sport, time and society p 80

However, as six of these meetings were at one place, Yarm, where seven out of nine of its meetings were held on Thursdays, and at least three of these meetings coincided with Yarm Fair. Thus, apart from Yarm, only two out of 184 race days were held on Thursday market days. Wednesday was the second most popular day for races. Four race towns had Wednesday markets: Barnsley, Hunmanby, Knaresborough and Tadcaster, and of 23 meetings at these places, only six included a Wednesday race. A total of 35 Yorkshire market towns held race meetings, and out of 224 meetings, (of one to six days) only 32 days coincided with a market day at the same town. New Malton, where there was a Tuesday market, and Yarm⁴⁰ were the places that most often held races on market day, with thirteen and seven days respectively. It should be noted, however, the race meetings designated as New Malton were actually held three miles out of the town at Langton Wold, and were on private land that belonged to a local gentry family⁴¹ thus causing no interference to the local market. Most towns chose not to hold their races on market day, fearing perhaps that the holiday atmosphere of a race meeting would disrupt the trade of the market.

Fridays

Fridays showed 12.7% of race days (69), a substantial fall after Thursday's peak, but the Saturday pay day was in sight for many working people⁴² so they may have been reluctant to take a day off, as they would have little time in which to make up for lost work, particularly if they had taken time off earlier in the week. Workers who had been absent early in the week often worked fourteen to sixteen hours a day at the end of the week to compensate for the loss in earnings.⁴³

Saturdays

Saturday was the most commonly found market day and the least popular weekday for horse races to be held. As it was usually pay day, it was important for factory and shop workers to be at work on Saturday to collect the week's wages, and these people worked until late that day to complete their work before Sunday.⁴⁴ As the commercial viability of many races depended on drawing crowds who would spend money on food, drink and entertainment to subsidise the prizes, then the number of spectators was a vital factor in deciding the days when the races

⁴⁰ Yarm was a service town and important inland port for much of the North Riding; its markets served a large agricultural hinterland and it imported and exported commodities by the River Tees, to and from Richmond, the North Riding, Cumberland and Holland via the large warehouses along the main street. R. Pococke 'Northern journeys of Bishop Richard Pococke' in North country diaries II ed., J.C. Hodgson Surtees Society Record Series 2 vol. 124 (Durham 1915) pp 199-252 p 250

⁴¹YC 3 Apr 1739

⁴²Brailsford, Sport, time, and society p 52

⁴³Thompson Time work discipline pp 73, 75

⁴⁴Brailsford, Sport, time, and society pp 52, 81

would be run and if only a small crowd could be drawn to a Saturday race, then the race would be held on a day which promised to be more profitable.

3.1.2 Race days from the Act of 1740 to 1749

The number of years examined to compile the statistics for Figure 4 is obviously markedly less than the number used for Figure 3; and it can be seen from section 1.3 and Figure 4 that only 15 places in Yorkshire held 174 racedays between 1740 and 1749, but it is possible to compare the proportions of races per day. Figure 4 shows that York and Hambleton's race days were still spread evenly across the week for the ten years from 1740 to 1749, and the reasons for this will be unchanged from the earlier period. The Royal Plate at Hambleton was usually run on the Saturday, and York held its races on the following Monday to Friday. The most popular day for racing at the minor Yorkshire courses became Wednesday instead of Thursday, with 32.7% (35) of races on that day compared with 26.6% before 1740, and Thursday then became the second most popular day with 27.1% (29) race days compared with 33.8% in 1700-1739. Friday had a rather similar proportion of race days i.e. 9.3% (10) compared with 12.7%. It is interesting that only one race day, at Beverley, has been discovered for a Saturday at the minor courses, and only one at any course, New Malton, on a Sunday after 1740, when racing began to be regulated by Parliament. The reason for this must be because Parliament insisted that a larger prize of £50 had to be provided for most races, and as Saturday had never been a successful race day, then it would have proved difficult for the organisers to raise this sum. Sunday racing had never been a commercial venture, and as all racing had now come under the scrutiny of the law, then Sunday was probably avoided. The proportion of Monday race days was almost doubled after the 1740 Act, with 6.8% (37) before and 11.2% after whilst Tuesdays remained the third most popular day at similar levels of 17.8% (98) before and 18% after 1740. These changes must be due to the closing down of the smaller courses following the 1740 Act.

3.2 Some factors that influenced the dates when horse races were held 1700-1739

Introduction

This section is an investigation into some of the factors that may have influenced the dates when horse races took place in Yorkshire between 1700 and 1739 which was a time when race organisers were free to hold race meetings when they pleased. After 1740 the races had to be organised at times when enough cash could be raised to pay £50 for the prizes, and only the larger meetings had survived, so that the pattern of race meetings after 1740 was artificial. Most horse races were events that were attended by many sections of society as well as the owners of racehorses. Labourers and artisans, nobility and gentry, town and country dwellers, young and old alike went to the races for their own reasons. The dates when the races were held were probably chosen for specific reasons, perhaps to be reasonably certain of suitable

weather conditions, or to ensure that the event would bring spectators who would indirectly provide the prize money. A private or semi-private horse race would have been held at the convenience of the founders.

Horse races were usually organised for any or all of three main purposes: matching racehorses to find the best, which was usually rewarded by a prize; for the promotion of trade in a district; and not least for gambling. Thus, the first purpose was for racehorse owners to compete with one another for a prize that was provided by the race organisers, or subscribers, or in the case of matches, by the competitors as a wager. During the eighteenth century, the Crown annually donated the Royal Plates, worth around 100 guineas each, as prizes to encourage breeders to produce fast, strong and sturdy horses.⁴⁵ The second purpose of racing was to encourage trade; these events were organised by a town or its businessmen. The third purpose was to allow private gambling between owners. Spectators were superfluous to the first and third type of race, but were absolutely essential to the second type of race, and this kind of race meeting was particularly designed to be attractive to the general public.

The organisers selected the dates when public race meetings were held with one main factor in mind; that was to attract large numbers of people to spend money as they watched. It was necessary to choose a time when the weather was likely to be fairly clement, and to ensure that the day would be convenient to both competitors and spectators. To be sure of drawing crowds and competitors, the occasion should not compete with another diversion nearby. These conditions might most easily be achieved by holding the races between spring and autumn, at a period when people were already having a holiday, and were gathered at a particular place for the purpose of pleasure or trade, like a fair, which could act as a social magnet for all levels of society.⁴⁶ An established festivity like a fair or traditional holiday time was an occasion when a horse race could be an additional attraction. The number, quality and variety of entertainment would have been a great factor in determining the size of the event and the resultant revenue. When the race organisers also wanted to attract a wealthier clientele, they arranged for the races to coincide with an event that drew the great and the good to town. In Yorkshire this meant the county assizes, when all of the justices and important members of county society and their families gathered at York. The relationship between horse races and the less prestigious gatherings of the justices of the peace of a district at the quarter sessions will be considered. Fine weather was an important requirement for the success of a meeting as large

⁴⁵LG 6 Aug 1702, 24 Jun 1708

⁴⁶Malcolmson Popular recreations pp 16-32 demonstrates the importance of fairs and religious holidays to people's recreational activities. D.Reid, 'Interpreting the festival calendar: wakes and fairs as carnivals' pp 125-154 in R.D. Storch, ed. Popular culture and custom in nineteenth century England (London 1982) shows that many religious festivals were used as secular holidays and pleasure times throughout the eighteenth century. J. Smith, Fairs feasts and frolics : customs and traditions in Yorkshire (Otley 1989) pp 153-170 discusses the holding of fairs and other secular activities timed to coincide with religious feasts. M.Girouard, The English town (London 1990) p 84 shows that many events including fairs were organised to attract 'polite society' as well as working people.

numbers of people would not turn out in bad conditions, and the horses might be unable to run in storms, floods or ice and snow. The availability of a suitable site, which might, in the case of carr land,⁴⁷ mean waiting until the grass crop had been cut and gathered, was critical to racing, but most towns and villages had commons which were open to all.⁴⁸

The origin of some race meetings is obscure; like many traditional parts of English life they had probably been held for so long that people just accepted them as part of the seasonal calendar, but it is possible in many other cases to link the holding of horse races with other social or ecclesiastical occasions. The times when race meetings were held may have changed after the legislation of 1740 which significantly altered horse racing.

Method

Figure 5 has been drawn using data on only those races for which documentary evidence has been discovered in the racing calendars, newspapers, diaries or correspondence of people involved in the sport.⁴⁹ Races that probably took place, like the annual Kiplingcotes race, have not been included for those years when no documentary evidence has been found of the event, so that the statistics are the minimum numbers of events, with no speculation about possibilities. Only races where the actual dates are known have been included. The dates for the moveable feasts and holy days of Easter, Hocktide, Ascension, Trinity and Whitsun, and the significant fixed saints' days have been ascertained using the Handbook of dates for students of English history.⁵⁰ The periods during which the moveable feasts could occur have been marked on Figure 5. The occurrence of fairs and markets has been compiled from several town and village histories, newspapers, the Victoria County Histories, Langdale's Topographical dictionary, and McCutcheon's Yorkshire fairs and markets.⁵¹ The race dates have been studied to see if the races were held in conjunction with holy days and fairs, because the occurrence of fairs and religious holidays indicates that a particular day was a significant public holiday. Malcolmson has shown that although the church was only

⁴⁷ Carr lands are wet, poorly drained areas used as meadows or for summer grazing

⁴⁸ W.G. Hoskins, The making of the English landscape (Harmondsworth 1983) p 177

⁴⁹ LG, YC, LM; Cheney 1730-1739; Orton passim; Wentworth pp1-35, 159-194; W.Chaytor, The papers of Sir William Chaytor of Croft (1639-1721) ed., M.V.Ashcroft NYCRO publication no.33 (Northallerton 1984); J.Clavering, 'The correspondence of Sir James Clavering 1680-1748' ed., H.T.Dickinson Surtees Society vol. 178 (Gateshead 1967); W.Calverley, 'The memorandum book of Sir Walter Calverley Bart.' ed., S.Margerison Yorkshire diaries and autobiographies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Surtees Society publications vol. 77 (Durham 1883); Christie, Manson & Woods, Catalogue of old English gold and silver plate, the property of Capt. Adrian Bethell of Rise Park, Hull to be sold on Wednesday, 24 April 1929 (London 1929) ; K.A. MacMahon, ed. Beverley Corporation minute books 1707-1835 YASRS vol. 122 (Leeds 1956); J.W. Walker, Wakefield its history and people (Wakefield 1966); Prior Early records

⁵⁰ Cheney Handbook of dates passim

⁵¹ YC, LM; T. Langdale, ed. A topographical dictionary of Yorkshire (Northallerton 1822); K.L. McCutcheon, ed. Yorkshire Fairs and markets to the end of the eighteenth century Publications of the Thoresby Society vol. 39 (Leeds 1940) which includes the Yorkshire section of W. Owen, ed. Owen's Book of fairs (London 1769)

peripherally involved in the traditional life of eighteenth century England, the ecclesiastical calendar still fixed some of the holiday times.⁵² The dates of the York Assizes have been obtained from the London Gazette and the dates of the quarter sessions from various local newspapers and books.

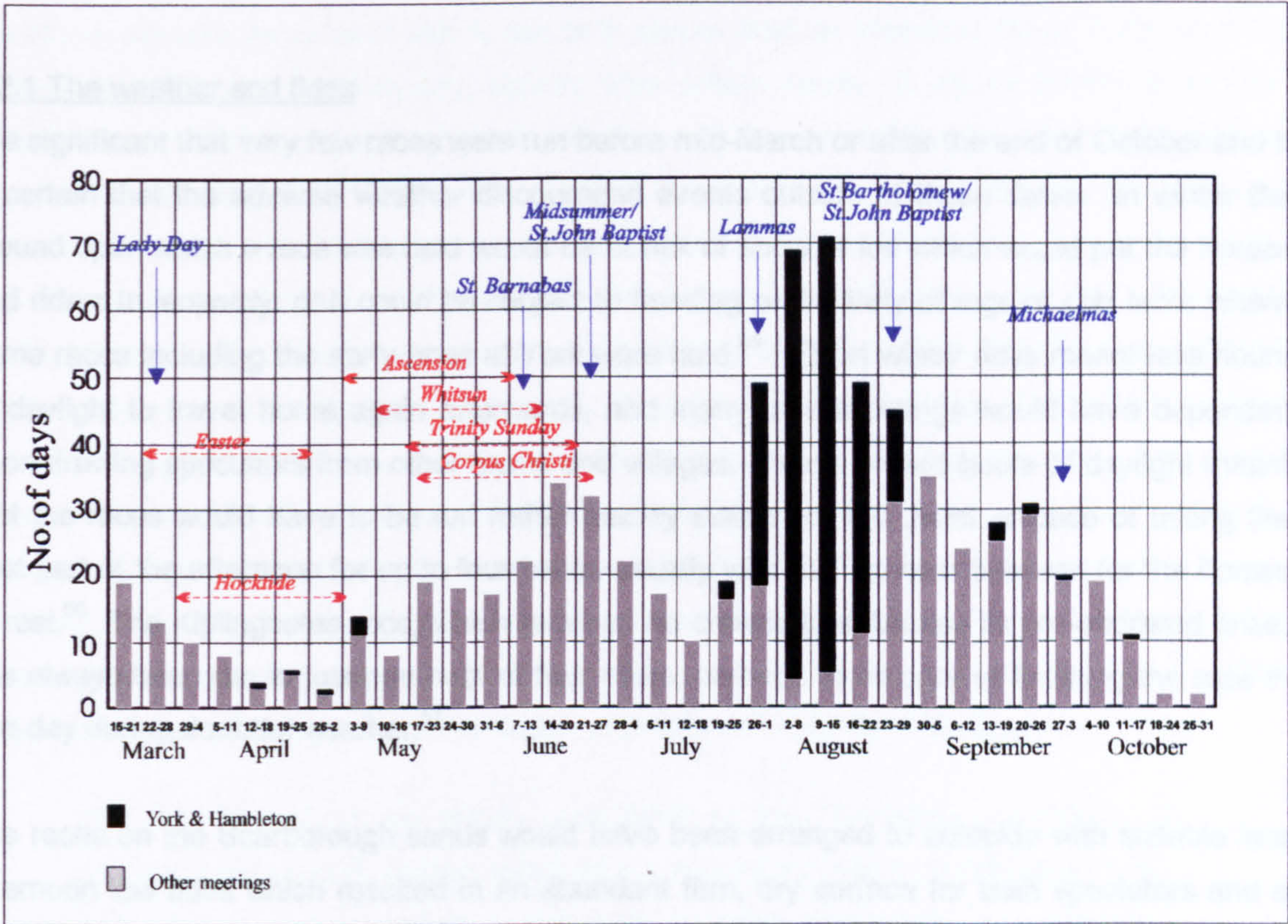


FIGURE 5
YORKSHIRE'S RACING CALENDAR 1700-1739

Figure 5 shows the numbers of race days, arranged in seven day periods, that are known to have taken place between March and the end of October for the years 1700 to 1739 inclusive. These months have been selected because only five race days have been noted outside of these dates and the years have been chosen as the period before Parliamentary interference in horse racing.⁵³ The year has been divided into seven day periods rather than individual days because some days e.g. Midsummer Day would have fallen on a Sunday in some years and thus a fair to celebrate it would be held immediately before or after 24 June; similarly the moveable feasts were on various dates in different years. Fairs and holidays were often of medieval religious origin and many had been intended to be held over a period of several days,

⁵²Malcolmson Popular recreations p 74

⁵³ 28 Feb at Bedale, Cheny 1737; 1 Nov at Bramham, Cheny 1731; 26 Dec at Malton, Cheny 1732; 22 Nov at Middleham, Cheny 1731; 6 Nov 1727, Cheny 1727; it is significant that these events were gentlemen's matches rather than public races.

or on certain days following a holy day.⁵⁴ The moveable feasts have been marked in red and although there are too many saints' days to be shown on Figure 5, some the most important ones have been indicated in blue print. It can be seen that the number of race days varies tremendously throughout the racing season. The reasons for the popularity of some weeks for races are discussed in the following section.

3.2.1 The weather and tides

It is significant that very few races were run before mid-March or after the end of October and it is certain that the adverse weather discouraged events outside of these dates. In winter the ground upon which a race was held would be at risk of snow or ice which would put the horses and riders in jeopardy, or it could be subject to flooding particularly of *ings* or *carr land*, where some races including the early ones at York were held.⁵⁵ Short wintry days meant less hours of daylight to travel home again afterwards, and many race meetings would have depended upon drawing spectators from other towns and villages. These limited hours of daylight meant that the races would have to be run rather quickly instead of the usual practice of taking the best part of the afternoon for up to four heats, usually with half an hour between for the horses to rest.⁵⁶ The Kiplingcotes race, which required no crowds to subsidise its pre-endowed prize, has always been run in just one heat of four miles, perhaps to be sure of finishing the race in one day during doubtful weather.⁵⁷

The races on the Scarborough sands would have been arranged to coincide with suitable late afternoon low tides which resulted in an abundant firm, dry surface for both spectators and a track.⁵⁸

3.2.2 Assizes and Quarter Sessions

Figure 5 shows that the period 26 July to 29 August was the period when most race days were reported, i.e. 303 and of these 234 were at York and Hambleton. It is important however to remember that from 1708, Hambleton races and from 1711, York races became two of the

⁵⁴ It has been shown that craftsmen working for the London Bridgemaster in medieval times were paid only for three days work during Michaelmas, Christmas, Easter and Whitsun weeks, and that they were not paid for the eves [days preceding] of holy days. J.H. Munro, 'Urban wage structure in Late-medieval England and the Low Countries: work time and seasonal wages' pp 63-78 in I. Blanchard, ed. Labour and leisure in historical perspective, thirteenth to twentieth centuries (Stuttgart 1994) This demonstrates that people had originally taken several days off work for holy days.

⁵⁵ *Ings* are wet meadows. Orton p 27 described the flooding of the Clifton *Ings* course at York in 1729 that caused the races there to be postponed, and held the following year on the Knavesmire

⁵⁶ Wallis section horse racing; most advertisements for horse races specified three or four heats e.g. three heats of four miles each at Beverley YC 10 May 1731

⁵⁷ Articles of the Kiplingcotes race HUL DDCV / 95/1-12

⁵⁸ The states of the tides for the Scarborough race-meetings for 1727-1729 have been ascertained using data provided by <http://aa.usno.navy.mil/aa/data/docs/moonphase.html> (with allowances made for the calendar change of 1752) and a current tide table from <http://www.uk.digeserve.com/ukfr/gbtide.htm> . These show that all the race dates coincided with low tides.

most prestigious events in the British racing calendar when the Royal Plates were regularly run for, and the results have therefore been well preserved in print. It is very likely that some meetings at minor courses were held which were not reported in the press and so the results were not preserved, which means that York may be proportionately over-represented in this work. Once the prestigious York meeting became established, then the older meeting at Hambleton became associated with it, and both places held an important Royal Plate meeting between the Saturday and Monday, usually after assize week. It will be shown in another section that the York meeting took place over several days, and this also means that York is prominently represented on Figure 5 but it also shows that the minor race meetings did not appear to compete with York whose meetings dominated the northern racing calendar at the end of July and in August. This was the time when the northern gentry and aristocracy traditionally converged upon York, the county town and provincial capital, for the social season that accompanied and followed the Summer Assizes. Borsay described eighteenth century York as: 'Amongst provincial capitals, the most prestigious social rendezvous.' The social season that grew from the assizes was a major feature of the calendar of many English towns, and was more pronounced with the greater standing of a place.⁵⁹ The gentry were able to use these occasions to publicly display their status and wealth, to mix with all levels of polite society, and to socialise with friends and relatives who lived at some distance.⁶⁰ The significance of public entertainment to these people is well described by Clark:

after the triumph of the county community at the Restoration, meetings of quarter sessions and assizes provided the excuse for grand political and social gatherings lasting several days, with balls, concerts, and horse-races (the latter sponsored by town and country magistrates).⁶¹

The social scene at York was well established by the early eighteenth century when Defoe visited the city, of which he wrote 'the keeping up assemblies among the younger gentry was first set up here.'⁶² So York's function as a social centre was not new; the assemblies may have been held even before the Civil War as part of the social season connected with the assizes, and so this was an ideal occasion upon which to graft a horse race meeting.⁶³ The gentry and aristocracy involved with the assizes and social season were often the people who owned the racehorses, and they sent their horses to display and race in front of the gathered society. Table 4 shows that the race meetings at Hambleton, York and Kiplingcotes were

⁵⁹Borsay Urban renaissance pp 30, 139-144 shows that most cultural activities were held during the winter season in the provincial capitals, but during the summer, the races became the climax of the social year.

⁶⁰P.J.Corfield, The impact of English towns 1700-1800 (Oxford 1982) p 52

⁶¹ P. Clark, Country towns in pre-industrial England (Leicester 1981) p 21

⁶²Quoted in Borsay Urban renaissance p 150; Defoe p 520

⁶³R. Wittkower, History of York Assembly Rooms (York 1951) p 2 quoted in Borsay Urban renaissance p 150

usually associated with the dates of the York Assizes; out of 249 days of racing at these places, 237 were connected with the assize dates.

TABLE 4
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACE DAYS AND ASSIZES 1700-1739

	Total race days	Race days coinciding with assizes
Hambleton	55	46
Kiplingcotes	18 ⁶⁴	17
York	<u>176</u>	<u>174</u>
	249	237

The assizes were held twice each year in Lent and at Summer when two Crown judges visited selected English county towns, which in the north of England were usually York, Lancaster and Durham.⁶⁵ The judges tried capital cases whilst certain local justices of the peace attended them as the Grand Jury, and decided on lesser cases. The proceedings of the courts and the resulting executions were all part of the entertainment for the gentry and the common folk in many English towns.⁶⁶ But the assizes were not merely judicial occasions, they were the seats of the county government when county matters were discussed and decisions made. The traditional nature of the assizes resulted in great ceremonial and social events when processions, feasting, theatricals and balls were organised.⁶⁷ The county High Sheriff played, and paid for, a major part in the proceedings. He welcomed the judges, and entertained them and the justices with great pomp and style when he provided a large escort of liveried gentlemen and their uniformed servants, as well as trumpeters, pages and halberdiers.⁶⁸ In 1752 Richard Sykes became High Sheriff, and recorded an account of his term of office in his diary; during the assizes he accompanied the judges to ceremonies at York Minster and the

⁶⁴One reported race day was a match that was not connected with the annual Kiplingcotes race, which always coincided with the Lent Assizes

⁶⁵LG 17 Jun 1700

⁶⁶Even in the nineteenth century, the executions on the Knavesmire, York's racecourse after 1731, were a public feature of the assizes. George Osbaldeston described an execution that he witnessed in 1829, G.Osbaldeston, Squire Osbaldeston: his autobiography ed., E.D.Cuming (London 1927) p 92; J. Stevens, Knivesmire, York's great racecourse, and its stories (London 1984) pp 32-40. Brailsford discusses the social aspects of the assizes at Norwich in 1787 in Sport, time, and society pp 70-71

⁶⁷Girouard pp 46-50

⁶⁸ Girouard p 50; G. Benson, An account of the city and county of the city of York (York 1911, republished 1968) vol. 1 pp 131-132. In 1744 the Grand Jury decided that the cost of the ceremonials was too great for the High Sheriff to bear, and ordered that the pages should no longer be needed, only two trumpeters with livery instead of a full suite of clothes, and only four footmen, with the usual number of halberdiers were to be used to escort the judges to and from their lodgings, to the court. The two treats for the gentlemen who accompanied the sheriffs to meet the judges were also to be discontinued. YC 20 Nov 1744

Castle as well as several dinners and suppers with the council and the Archbishop of York. The gentry had their private dinners, and went to the theatre, concerts and assemblies.⁶⁹ Many of the gentry had duties to fulfil, but many others came to see and to be seen and to be entertained.⁷⁰ In 1708 the York Corporation decided that 'the making of a yearly horse-race...may be of advantage and profit to the ...city' and agreed to make an annual contribution of £15 'towards a plate to encourage and bring about a horse-race...and to invite the gentry to run their horses for the same.'⁷¹ From the first advertised York race meeting in 1709,⁷² the races were timed to coincide with the occasion when the county gentry were in York for the business of the assizes and Grand Jury. The dates of the York and Hambleton races were usually announced after the assize date was published in the London Gazette, but in 1720 the prematurely advertised dates of the races had to be altered to fit in with the assizes.⁷³ The racing calendars show that all of the prominent northern racing men entered their horses at York and that would have resulted in a dearth of horses for races in other parts of Yorkshire.⁷⁴

It is unlikely to be a coincidence that the annual Kiplingcotes race was held at the same time as the York Lent Assizes, and this is the most plausible reason for the date when it was run. It was one of the first races of the year, and was specifically ordered by its founders to be held on the third Thursday in March; it was always, and still is held between the 15 and 21 of March, that is the time that the assizes were usually held. The race prize was provided by the interest on the money subscribed by 49 Yorkshire gentlemen in c.1669.⁷⁵ Thus, the race needed no support or subsidy from any town or businesses for its viability. The founders, who were all gentry, organised the race for their own amusement, and would have carefully set the race date at a time to suit only themselves; this race would have provided an excellent afternoon's diversion during the assizes. The racecourse was only eighteen miles from York by a reasonable road⁷⁶ on well-drained, high wold ground, close to the great house of the chief subscriber, the Earl of Burlington. What better time to hold a horse race than during the days when all of the county gentry would be meeting at the York Lent Assizes which usually took place around the 10th to 20th March? This was a time when few other races were held; only two other races have been noted for this time and so it would have provided some extra

⁶⁹HUL DDSY 101/47 3 Mar 1745; 102/1 Mar, Jul

⁷⁰Girouard p 50

⁷¹ York House Book 1 Nov 1708 quoted in Borsay Urban renaissance pp 219, 182

⁷²LG 23 Aug 1709

⁷³LG 9 Jul 1720 the date of the races was changed from 30 Jul to 6 Aug

⁷⁴ Orton *passim*

⁷⁵ HUL DDCV/95 /1-12

⁷⁶Celia Fiennes travelled this route in 1697 with no difficulty, and saw Londesborough, which was Lord Burlington's great house, Fiennes p 97

entertainment during the assizes. The reason given for the early date of the Kiplingcotes race is usually said to be to test the fitness of the horses after the winter, and the social aspect of the assizes is not mentioned.⁷⁷ By the end of March i.e. one week after Easter, when the earliest quarter sessions would be held, many of the gentry would have left York to return home, in order to act in their honorary capacity as justices of the peace.

The times when quarter sessions were held did not coincide with race meetings; in fact, the two events rarely occurred together during the period studied. Each Riding's justices of the peace met at an inn, in one or more of the towns of their area for about a week on these occasions, to deal with certain provincial matters including the provision of public services, bridge and road repairs, and poor relief. The quarter sessions did not attract society gatherings in the way that the assizes did; they were very local and administrative occasions. The men who were the justices were invariably the large landowners of a district who were much occupied with parochial business during the quarter sessions meetings, and would have had little time free for horse races, and as the inns already had their custom, there was no need for the innkeepers to provide daytime entertainment for the gentlemen. The week following Easter, at mid-July and at mid-October were the times when quarter sessions were held during the racing season, Figure 5 shows that relatively few races were held then.⁷⁸ The periods marked for the moveable feast of Easter, the middle of July, and the middle of October have few race days. The mid-October race meetings noted in this survey appear to be occasional scattered meetings, except for the regular ones at Yarm (5), and Bedale (7), where no quarter sessions were held, but the races did coincide with local fairs.⁷⁹

3.2.3 Fairs and religious festivals

A holiday calendar had developed from medieval times,⁸⁰ and although the days celebrated as holy days or holidays varied between villages and districts, they were originally mainly dependent upon the ecclesiastical authorities.⁸¹ A historian of customs, Bushaway wrote: 'The local customary calendars provided a frame of reference in which was expressed a perception

⁷⁷Cheny, 1741 stated that 'The prize at Kipling-Coates was founded by a body of Fox-hunters...tis looked upon as a proper Taste-tryal, or proof for horses, how they have come through the winter...' There was also a fair at Pocklington, seven miles from Kiplingcotes, on the vigil and feast of the Annunciation, McCutcheon p 165, but this is unlikely to have influenced the holding of a race privately financed by such eminent men.

⁷⁸G.C.F. Forster, The East Riding Justices of the Peace in the seventeenth century EYLHS no. 30 (Beverley 1973) pp 30-36, sessions were required to be held in the weeks following Easter, the Translation of Saint Thomas the Martyr, i.e. 7 July, and St Michael i.e. 29 September. J.C. Atkinson ed. Quarter Sessions records NRRS vol. 5 (London 1887) passim; HCAO CQB 27/70; G.D. Lumb, ed. Extracts from the Leeds Mercury 1721-1729 Thoresby Society Miscellanea vol. 22 (Leeds 1915) p 203

⁷⁹Cheny 1730, 1731, 1732, 1735, 1737, 1738, 1739; McCutcheon pp 173,177

⁸⁰Malcolmson Popular recreations pp 15-33

⁸¹C.R.Cheney, 'Rules for the observance of feast days in medieval England' Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research vol. 34 no. 90 Nov 1961 pp 117-147

of the social structure of the community⁸² to show that festivals or holidays were part of the ordinary people's every day life and expectations. The amount of time that people spent on holiday in the eighteenth century is not known today but it is likely to be considerably more, in many cases, than people were allowed by the mid-nineteenth century. The Bank of England was closed for 47 holidays in 1761 compared with only four in 1834.⁸³ Many fairs began as providers of food and entertainment to pilgrims attending the feast days of saints buried at particular shrines e.g. Beverley and Bridlington, and the holy days on which the fairs were held were also holidays for local people.⁸⁴ Holy days were originally non-working days so that people could attend church, but these developed into days for recreation, and from medieval times the church authorities deplored the secularisation of these holidays, but there was little that they could do about it.⁸⁵ Bushaway shows that Tussler, the Elizabethan commentator on agricultural affairs, and the Victorian writer Gibbs indicated that:

community festivals delineate the cycle of rural labour...Even those festivals which were connected to or derived from church calendar ceremonies are not referred to for their significance as ecclesiastical rituals.⁸⁶

Fairs and their associated holidays had been long established in the annual calendar of English life and were to remain so until the turnpiking of many roads, and later the construction of canals and railways altered the method of transporting and trading in several commodities which made fairs redundant as trading exchanges.⁸⁷ Some fairs were vital for the purpose of trade in commodities like cloth and grain, or for cattle dealing, and had an essential commercial function; the fair at Leeds in 1725 was estimated to have drawn 2,000 people and £30,000 changed hands.⁸⁸ Many country fairs, particularly those near to towns, had lost much of their former commercial trade when that trade was rationalised in the towns, and small fairs became providers of entertainment in order to overcome the economic difficulties that they faced.⁸⁹ The person or body to whom the tolls were paid obviously wanted the fair to continue, and the added attraction of a horse race might induce more people to come into a town and spend money on food, drink and entertainment. Many race events, whether connected with

⁸² B. Bushaway, By rite. Custom, ceremony and community in England 1700-1880 (London 1982) p 34

⁸³ J.A. Pimlott, The Englishman's holiday (London 1947) p 81

⁸⁴ In the 4th century, St. Basil had complained that this was merely an excuse for holding a market in a churchyard, and by the 15th century, the traders, in some places, had moved outside of the church grounds, McCutcheon pp 16, 25-26

⁸⁵ Malcolmson Popular recreations pp 5-6

⁸⁶ Bushaway pp 34-35

⁸⁷ C. Platt, The English medieval town (London 1976) pp 82, 94

⁸⁸ McCutcheon pp 126-127, 145

⁸⁹ Corfield pp 20-21

fairs or not, usually had booths both for gambling,⁹⁰ and selling refreshments, particularly intoxicating drinks.⁹¹ Extra money was generated for the town's economy by a common condition of entry to the races, that the competing horses should be accommodated in named stables for up to ten days prior to the race day; these premises, like the booth proprietors, were obliged to subscribe towards the races in return for the trade that the races generated for them.⁹² An established festivity like a fair or traditional holiday time was an occasion to which a horse race could be an additional attraction to attract people from a much wider locality.⁹³ The number, quality and variety of entertainment would have been a great factor in determining the size of the event and the revenue thus raised.

Table 5 has been compiled from the precise dates of the 756 reported race days found in Yorkshire towns and villages, between 1700 and 1739, that have been collected from the newspapers and racing calendars, and every race day has been checked against the dates for the moveable feasts of Easter, Ascension, Whitsun, Corpus Christi, and the popular fixed saints days listed in Cheny's handbook; the dates for fairs checked with McCutcheon, and many town histories. The numbers of race days that have been found to occur at the same time or in close proximity to fair dates or religious holidays has been noted. In a few cases it has proved impossible to ascertain which category to put a race day into because of the overlapping of the some of the moveable feasts, which can occasionally make one of them coincide with Lady Day, or St Barnabas Day, or the already joint day of Midsummer and St. John the Baptist. Where a holy day coincides with a fair date then this time has been classified as a fair. The popular racing year began in mid-March and finished at the end of October. Between these months, during the period studied, 259 out of the 756 race days reported can be shown to have been held at the same time or within seven days of an established fair at the same place. Malcolmson has counted the fairs held for two weeks at either side of Whitsun as Whitsun fairs,⁹⁴ but although this may be a reasonable assumption, as the Whitsun holiday could last for up to thirteen days in some parts of England,⁹⁵ if this parameter was allowed for every saint's day in this survey then the whole racing season would be holiday time. Fair times were not always precise dates; some fairs were granted for saint's days which meant that if that day fell on a Sunday then another day was chosen for that year,⁹⁶ or the date might be given as

⁹⁰Vamplew The turf p 21

⁹¹MacMahon Minute books p 4

⁹²YC 3 Apr, 19 June 1730, 10 May 1731, 6 Feb 1739

⁹³Bushaway p 36

⁹⁴Malcolmson Popular recreations p 32

⁹⁵ A. Howkins, 'The taming of Whitsun: the changing face of a nineteenth-century rural holiday' in E.& S. Yeo, eds. Popular culture and class conflict 1590-1914 (Sussex 1981) pp 187-208 p 189

⁹⁶ McCutcheon p 84

"Wednesday sennight afore Ascension Day", or the first Saturday in December, for which an allowance of days has been made.⁹⁷ All fairs were not held by charter so there may be no remaining documentary evidence for a few fairs, and others may have died out before the races were held, but there may have been a holiday remaining.⁹⁸

TABLE 5
NUMBERS OF FAIRS AND HOLY DAYS THAT COINCIDED WITH RACE DAYS IN
YORKSHIRE 1700-1739

Event	Days
Fairs	259
Lady Day	35
Easter	17
Ascension	17
Whitsun	39
May Day	6
Corpus Christi	14
St. Barnabas	32
St. Thomas	18
Nat. St. John Baptist/ Midsummer	70
St. Bartholomew/ Dc. St. John Baptist	83
Lammas	37
Michaelmas	27
Total 654	

This is 87 % of race days traced

Table 5 shows that 654 race days coincided with holidays or fair days, and that the major holiday times of Easter, Ascension, Corpus Christi, St. Barnabas,⁹⁹ and St. Thomas were popular times for holding horse races, but that even more races have been found to coincide with the celebrations of Lady Day, Whitsun, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist/ Midsummer, and Lammas, but the feast day when most race days have been found is St Bartholomew's Day. May Day was the principal springtime holiday but it was a non-religious day, and so might be expected to be a time for secular pursuits like horse racing, but it was not; it was a day when

⁹⁷H.Best, The farming and memorandum books of Henry Best of Elmswell 1642 ed., D.Woodward Records of Social and Economic History, New Series VIII (Oxford 1984) p 118; McCutcheon p 175

⁹⁸McCutcheon p 69

⁹⁹Brailsford wrote that St Barnabas' day had probably been lost as a sporting day by 1775, but in Yorkshire alone there were at least 21 race days associated with it. D. Brailsford, 'England 1775-1815: a time for play' in I. Blanchard, ed. Labour and leisure in historical perspective, thirteenth to twentieth centuries (Franz Steiner Stuttgart 1994) pp 101-109

young people danced and enjoyed themselves informally, rather than a commercial holiday.¹⁰⁰ The Easter holiday was marked by games and sports, and some fairs were held - these Easter fairs have been classified only as fairs and so the figures for Easter may appear slightly low, but in the eighteenth century the secular event is likely to have been more significant than the religious.¹⁰¹ Following Easter was the ancient custom of Hocktide when many rents were due; this occurred on the second Monday and Tuesday after Easter Day,¹⁰² and it may have been a time when many people had less cash to spend on pleasure although it was taken as a holiday in many parts of England.¹⁰³ The week after Easter was also the time for quarter sessions to be held, when certain of the gentry would be busy with district administration instead of pleasure.

The festivities associated with the Ascension festival only appear to have encouraged seventeen race days to be organised,¹⁰⁴ but a little later, at Whitsuntide, there was a significant increase in the number of race days i.e. 39. The English weather and number of hours of daylight would have improved by this time i.e. mid-May to mid-June, making conditions for racing better. Whitsun was the most widely observed summer holiday of the humbler people¹⁰⁵ who would have formed the largest group, and as such this may have been a time when the largest crowds might gather for an event. The dates of the races at Beverley were set for Whitsun in some years by the corporation that had control over the common land on which they were held.¹⁰⁶ Two significant festivals take place during the second week after Whitsun: the celebrations of the Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi.¹⁰⁷ It can be seen from Figure 5 that there was a consistent occurrence of race days during the periods when the dates of these three great Christian feasts overlapped, but the number of race days was less when only one holiday was celebrated. Corpus Christi and Ascension days were responsible for fourteen and seventeen race days respectively. It may also be significant that the Ascension, Whitsun, Trinity and Corpus Christi holidays were the particular dates in the legal calendar when the

¹⁰⁰Malcolmson Popular recreations p 31; Bushaway p 47

¹⁰¹Malcolmson Popular recreations p 29

¹⁰²Cheney Handbook of dates p 40; W. Hone, The every day book (London 1878) vol. 1 p 238 discusses Hocktide's continuing significance in the nineteenth century, it is seldom heard of today.

¹⁰³ C. Hole, English traditional customs (London 1975) p 51

¹⁰⁴ According to Hole pp 71-73, Ascension Day appears to have been absent from the secular merrymaking associated with many religious feasts, and was kept as a holy time.

¹⁰⁵ Hone vol. 2 col. 666, quoted in Malcolmson p 31

¹⁰⁶MacMahon Minute books p 16

¹⁰⁷ Hole p 78; Benson York p 93, Corpus Christi was the great event of the year in York when the twelve mystery plays and pageants were performed in the city.

business in the law courts ceased and those of the gentry involved in the law were able to return to their country estates, and provincial social life.¹⁰⁸

An increase in the number of race days can be seen in early June which as well as falling within the religious holidays above, coincided with Saint Barnabas' Day (11 June) when several fairs were held including an important horse fair at Boroughbridge which in turn determined the date of the Selby Horse Fair and races.¹⁰⁹ However it is unclear whether some of the race days were arranged for Whitsun or St. Barnabas, and as Whitsun was probably the more important feast, then those days have been assigned to that holiday in the table, leaving 21 days racing held when only St Barnabas Day was being celebrated. Figure 5 indicates that many race days have been found to have taken place in the week during which Midsummer Day occurred; this falls on the same day as the feast of Saint John the Baptist (24 June), and was one of the most popular holidays in the eighteenth century. This was the date for at least nine Yorkshire fairs including Beverley and Rotherham, where it had no apparent connection with horse races, and Halifax where the race meetings coincided with the fair and patronal festival.¹¹⁰ August was dominated by the races at York and Hambleton which were linked to the York Assizes, but the York Lammas Fairs also took place at the same time on 129 race days,¹¹¹ and it is likely that the profitability of the York races was aided by the crowds generated by both events.

The now neglected feast of St Bartholomew on the 24 August was in the early eighteenth century associated with 70 race days. At the turn of the Millennium we have almost forgotten this holiday, but this reminds us of the days when this was the greatest fair time of the year. In Smithfield, London, the rowdy Bartholomew Fair went on for several weeks as both a pleasure and trade fair.¹¹² On her travels at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Celia Fiennes expected to find fairs, however shabby at Bartholomew-tide anywhere in the country.¹¹³ It was a holiday that was celebrated in town and countryside, by farm workers, printers and shoemakers and so it is not surprising that it was a popular time for horse races.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸Cheney Handbook of dates p 65

¹⁰⁹T.S. Turner, History of Aldborough and Boroughbridge (Boroughbridge 1853) p 72; W. Morrell, The history and antiquities of Selby (Selby 1867) p 293; Cheney 1730; McCutcheon p 19

¹¹⁰McCutcheon p 18; T.W. Hanson, The story of old Halifax (Halifax 1968, 1st pub 1920) p 33. Midsummer was a very important pagan festival that was translated by the early Christian church to become the feast of Saint John the Baptist. It used to be celebrated by festivities and burning of bonfires on hilltops all over Europe. In Sweden it is still a national celebration. Hole p 79

¹¹¹McCutcheon p 32, 168

¹¹² It is said to have inspired Hogarth to draw the picture of Southwark Fair, perhaps a better commercial venture. D. Jarrett, England in the age of Hogarth (London 1974) pp 181-182

¹¹³ Morris p 129

¹¹⁴Bushaway p 45

The greatest number of race days away from York i.e. 35 was found in the following week which was 30 August to 5 September and are accounted for here mainly by the Middleham and Wakefield races; both places have patronal festivals at this time, Middleham has the Nativity of St. Mary on 8 September, and Wakefield has the Decollation of St. John the Baptist on 29 August. September shows between 20 and 35 race days per week; this was the month when many villages all over England held their annual parish feasts or wakes.¹¹⁵ At the end of September, Michaelmas (29 September) was a rural holiday with six fairs in Yorkshire¹¹⁶ as well as parish feasts and wakes.¹¹⁷ The feasts and the horse races may have been held in late August and September because the large numbers of the rural population dependant upon agriculture for their livelihood at this time, now had some time to pause after the various harvests had been gathered in, and many labourers and farm servants had money in their pockets to spend on pleasure when they were paid off at Michaelmas.¹¹⁸

3.2.4 Work-related factors

In the early eighteenth century three quarters of the population lived in villages and hamlets whose economy was dominated by some kind of agriculture. This lifestyle obviously presented many times when work was either slack, or too busy to allow people time for leisure. As well as routine maintenance work, intensive labour was needed at planting and harvesting, but after the crop was brought in, there would be plenty of free time for leisure. Those areas associated with animal husbandry had their own busy periods for lambing, sheep shearing and slaughtering.¹¹⁹ Industrial areas often had periods of reduced labour requirements but these were unlikely to have been so marked as in agricultural places. Many of the racecourses were situated on pasture or meadowland and obviously, the races had to wait until their primary function had been fulfilled.

The month of April had few horse races, which is not surprising since it was a very busy time for farmers, when the sowing of spring crops was being completed and ploughing was started in readiness for the autumn sowing of cereal crops.¹²⁰ June and July were the busiest months for sheep farmers as this was when they washed and sheared their animals to collect the wool from them, but when the shearing was finished then the farmers provided feasts and holidays,

¹¹⁵ McCutcheon pp 16-18; Bushaway p 35,37, many parish churches celebrated their dedication on 14 September, Holy Cross Day, with a wake or feast.

¹¹⁶ McCutcheon p 19

¹¹⁷ Malcolmson Popular recreations pp 16-19

¹¹⁸ Vamplew Pay up p 25

¹¹⁹ Vamplew Pay up pp 21-22

¹²⁰ G.E. Fussell, Village life in the eighteenth century (Worcester 1947) p 49

like harvest festivals, for their servants. Peas were cut, and manure was spread on the land, together with other jobs, including cutting timber, that required dry conditions for transport.¹²¹ However, the month of June has been found to be a popular time for horse races, particularly in some of the towns where agriculture would have played a less significant part in the lives of the inhabitants. The busy manufacturing town of Doncaster,¹²² the village of Chapel Allerton only two miles from the great industrial centre of Leeds, where the Leeds races were held, and the inland port, ship building and market town of Selby,¹²³ all had races in June. Villages in sheep farming districts like Askrigg, Bedale and Helmsley have not been found to hold horse races in June, the busy sheep shearing month, but an additional factor is that the areas surrounding these places were also associated with lead or iron mining and smelting - industries which were best suited to the drier months of the year when the mines were less prone to flooding.¹²⁴ The reasons for holding races at any particular time are unlikely to be simple.

Less race days have been found in July; this month was particularly busy and critical for agricultural communities as it was the time for haymaking that took place in all parts of Yorkshire.¹²⁵ Meadow grass was cut to make into much needed winter feed for the animals; without this hay there would have been little for the animals to eat over the winter until the new grass grew in spring. Once the grass was mowed it was left to dry and eventually taken away. The whole process was much affected by the weather and might take the best part of the month before the meadows were cleared but afterwards there were feasts and holidays.¹²⁶ Cams and ings might be used for hay production and once the grass was cut then the races could be held on them; horse races took place on the pasture at Yarm in August.¹²⁷ At Beverley, the annual races were run during Whitsun, (at the end of May) in 1732, and were blamed with causing severe damage to the common pasture where they were held; subsequently the town corporation decreed that in future the races should not take place before Midsummer.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Fussell pp 51, 63; Bushaway p 44

¹²² Defoe p 481 described Doncaster in the early eighteenth century as a 'noble, large spacious town, exceedingly populous and a great manufacturing town.' where knitting was the main industry.

¹²³ Defoe p 517

¹²⁴ Hartley & Ingilby p 22

¹²⁵ W. Marshall, The rural economy of Yorkshire (London 1788) vol. 1 p 292

¹²⁶ Best pp 33-36; Bushaway p 44

¹²⁷ Cheny 1730; J.W. Wardell, A history of Yarm (Sunderland 1957) p 146

¹²⁸ Macmahon Minute books p 16

The Yorkshire corn harvest usually began in mid-August and ended in mid-September¹²⁹ so that this will have been a very busy period in the arable districts like the East Riding where no races have been found at this time. Relatively little corn was produced in the North and West Ridings¹³⁰ and it is here that many races have been noted during the end of August and early September. Wakefield and Barnsley in the industrial West Riding, and Middleham in the North Riding are some of the places where races took place in September.

As the autumn weather grew colder and wetter it will have been more difficult to get the working people to support race meetings, travel became onerous, the days were shorter, and many of the gentry went to London for the season there. The new farming year began in November at Martinmas that kept the country people well occupied. Travel was often impossible in winter, and getting the horses to the courses would often have been too dangerous to contemplate. Therefore, without the support of the owners or spectators, racing ended until spring started the cycle anew.

3.2.5 Competition with other race meetings

The arrangement of race meetings around the social and agricultural seasons was probably complicated by the necessity of ensuring that race meetings were not competing with one another for horses or crowds. Tables 6 and 7 have been compiled to show whether races were held in more than one place on any date for 1730 and 1739 respectively. These years were chosen because they are times when evidence of many races has been found. In both years, very little overlapping of race meetings between places has been found. Table 6 shows that on only three dates were races held at more than one place in Yorkshire. On every occasion i.e. Yarm and Wakefield, Arthington and Bridlington, and Selby and Middleham the courses were such a distance apart that there would have been no conflict of interest, and in the latter case, the event was a private match rather than a public race meeting, and so would have been no competition for the Selby races.

¹²⁹Best pp 44-57, Henry Best wrote that; 'Wee began to sheare Massledine [a mixture of wheat and rye] this 19th of August [1641] Wee made an end of our Massledine in 4 dayes and began to sheare wheate the 26th of August,...which wee finished in two dayes... Wee began to mow barley this 9th of September...and made an end of mowing this 16th of September'

¹³⁰D. Hey, Yorkshire from A.D. 1000 (London 1986) pp 144-146

TABLE 6

RACE MEETINGS AND DATES FOR 1730 IN YORKSHIRE

Place	Dates	
Kiplingcotes	19	March
Middleham	2-3	April
Yarm	10	April
Hunmanby	22	April
Doncaster	6-7	May
New Malton	9-11	June
Richmond	23-24	June
Selby	25	June
Middleham	25	June M
Knaresborough	26-27	June
Arthington	1	July
Bridlington	1	July
Hambleton	1	August
York	3-8	August
Wakefield	10	August
Wakefield	18	August
Yarm	18,19,20	August
Pontefract	25-26	August
Birstall	2-3	September
Bamsley	11	September
Methley	16-17	September
Chapel Allerton	24	September
Otley	30	September
Bedale	1-2	October
Pudsey	7-8	October

M = private match

TABLE 7

RACE MEETINGS AND DATES FOR 1739 IN YORKSHIRE

Place	Dates	
Kiplingcotes	15	March
Middleham	22-23	March
Boroughbridge	28-30	March
Bishop Burton	23,25,26	April
Fremington	24	April
Doncaster	7	May
New Malton	14-17	May
Rotherham	23-25	May
Gatherley	31 May-1	June
Beverley	5-7	June
Doncaster	13-15	June
Halifax	26-28	June
Selby	3	July
Adwalton	19-20	July
Barnsley	2-3	August
Thirsk	15	August
Hambleton	18	August
York	20-25	August
Wakefield	4-6	September
Pontefract	25- 27	September
Yarm	26-28	September
Bedale	4-5	October
Askrigg	9	October

Table 7 shows that only two dates have been found when races were held at more than one place and that in both cases, Bishop Burton and Fremington, and Pontefract and Yarm those places were sufficiently far apart to cause no competition between the meetings.

These findings suggest that during the early eighteenth century, the race organisers set their dates with regard to other meetings that they expected to be held, so that there would be a minimum of competition between races.¹³¹

Summary

Races were held at particular times for various reasons that may not always be immediately apparent today. The dates when people decided to hold horse races were governed by three main factors: the climate, the source of the prize, and whether other race meetings were being held at the same time. The weather could easily prevent a race being run; the state of the ground was important to racing as waterlogged or frozen courses could cause serious injury to horse and rider and so organisers would not risk their event failing, instead they usually arranged race meetings from mid-March to the end of October. Horse races were usually organised for someone's advantage; either the owners of the horses, or the promoters, and the benefit would be mainly in terms of prize money, or profit from the entertainment. The Royal Plates and the Kiplingcotes races were not dependent on any promoters for their prizes, and could have been run without an audience, but most other events relied upon prizes donated by the promoters so that it would be essential to attract crowds of spectators to buy refreshments. The pattern of race days at York and Hambleton was quite different to that at the minor courses. York and Hambleton were, to some extent, orientated towards the better off patrons who could attend on any day, particularly Saturdays. These inter-related race meetings usually spanned an entire week, including two Saturdays, but not generally on the Sunday. The Crown funded the Royal Plates on two days, so there was no need for spectators to be attracted to spend money and subsidise these prizes. The Royal Plate at Hambleton in particular, was not run for the benefit of the spectators, like the other Royal Plates, it was set up essentially to encourage breeders.

The minor courses presented a more varied pattern with mid-week race days proving to be markedly popular, in particular Thursdays before the 1740 Act, and Wednesdays after it. This slight change must be due to the fact that the small rural meetings were abolished in 1740. The pattern of race meetings before the 1740 Act was a natural one that will have followed the traditions of the area; after the Act, the races were restricted to the larger towns, and some customary events will have been lost. The reasons for organising entertainment like races were mainly commercial, and the days involved were those times when people were able and willing to attend, because they were either already on holiday, or took time off. It is unlikely that only a horse race would necessarily induce large numbers of folk to absent themselves from work, so the fact that the majority of race meetings coincided with another event like a fair

¹³¹Brailsford wrote that by 1787 race meetings were becoming integrated into loose regional timetables to avoid clashes, resulting in a regular programme for part of the season. Tables 6 and 7 show that a timetable for race meetings was already in existence in one particular region by the 1730s. D.Brailsford, '1787:an eighteenth century sporting year' in Research Quarterly for Sport and Exercise 1984 vol. 55 pp 217-230

or traditional holy day, when people might not have gone to work anyway is not surprising. The two circumstances will have complimented one another. There was no connection between St. Monday, the day that self-employed tradesmen devoted to drinking instead of work, and horse racing in Yorkshire. It is likely that the public houses already had plenty of custom on Mondays, and so they organised race meetings for other days. Saturday was pay day, and Sundays races were discouraged, leaving the middle of the week for race meetings. Only two minor courses held Sunday races, and these were a gentlemen's subscription race and three matches, all of which were probably illegal, but as the arrangements would have been made by the gentry who were also the magistrates, there were no repercussions.

The seasonal nature of agricultural work, which to some extent affected most of the population, certainly influenced race dates. In addition, the seasonal work pattern of a largely agricultural community had times when workers could be spared from work; from the July hay harvest to the August corn harvest, farms would be busy from dawn to dusk, and so there would be little chance of rural races receiving support from either the racehorse owners or the working people. Race meetings in industrial areas were not so tied to the agrarian calendar. Few race meetings have been noted at busy periods in the agrarian calendar and most races have been found at slack times and at the close of the farming year, at Michaelmas. The association between race meetings and religious festivals is clearly important; people obviously continued to regard the large number of holy days as work-free days during the early eighteenth century. The times when fairs were held were probably also influenced by the agricultural activities of an area, and so it would be convenient, and profitable to hold races in conjunction with a pleasure event like a fair and many horse races were arranged to take advantage of the occasion. Markets, which were essentially commercial occasions did not attract horse races; the traders would not want customers to be drawn away to the races, and the inns would, again have had plenty of business. Quarter session meetings were not associated with horse racing; these were occasions when the gentry present really did attend to their civic duties, and were not usually accompanied by their families, unlike the assize weeks at York. The York Summer Assizes were the highlight of the social calendar for wealthy northern people, and as such, the festivities filtered down to the working people. The pageantry of the assizes, and the entertainment that it provided, attracted enormous numbers of people of all classes, and the very astute York City Council organised the races as an added attraction. The Kiplingcotes race was sponsored by the gentlemen attending the York Lent Assizes to provide entertainment for themselves during the week. The minor meetings did not compete with either the York races, or with one another; a Yorkshire regional calendar of race meetings was already in operation by the early eighteenth century.

CHAPTER 4

THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINED THE LENGTH OF RACE MEETINGS

Where the steep Cliffs precipitate descend...
At frequent periods the receding Main
Leaves on the Sands a smooth and spacious Plain...
Now gay diversions soon to mirth invite...
Two sprightly Coursers sally to the Race...¹

One of the factors that influenced the success and profitability of a race meeting was the amount of money that was spent at it, which must in turn have depended upon the number of spectators it was able to attract.² The prospective profits helped to subsidise the prizes, and a long meeting required a more substantial sum to provide three prizes, so that it would have to draw large numbers of spectators. There was normally only one race held on each day of a meeting, but as most races were run in up to four heats, then this one event would take up the whole afternoon, allowing for rest periods for the horses in between heats. Support could be given by many means, by various donors, and for several reasons. (See section 2.1) The places where races were held had a great deal to gain from a sporting event that could be enlarged to become a social gathering to which many more people could be drawn by the addition of a horse race. Towns that could offer entertainment and accommodation alongside the sporting activity could take on new or increased prosperity from the trade that the races encouraged, and increased trade and prosperity made entertainment like horse racing more viable so that the number of days that a race meeting occupied must have partly depended on the economic status of the place where it was held. Some of the long meetings, however, were held at places with a relatively insignificant commercial status. This section seeks to identify the reasons for the length of race meetings in Yorkshire, by examining population figures, roads and communications, the different functions of towns and villages where races were held, entertainment coinciding with the races, and accommodation and facilities for visitors with regard to the length of meetings.

During the eighteenth century, towns played a major part in the growth of the leisure industry. Those towns that were willing and able to provide for the needs of the new large group of consumers of diverse entertainment were able to attract trade and provide employment for themselves.³ Race meetings were supported, not just by the inhabitants of a place but by

¹Anon., The Scarborough miscellany 1732 (Scarborough 1733) pp 52-53

²Vamplew The turf pp 18-19

³Corfield p 51

people from a much more extensive catchment area, who came to town for pleasure and business, so a race meeting in an area where there were many small towns and villages close by could receive adequate support although it might only be a tiny place itself.⁴ The longer the meeting in a small town, the more essential it was to attract patronage from a wide area,⁵ although the population of a large town could ensure the viability of a nearby village race meeting. A remote town race meeting could be supported by a large area for which it provided a focus for trade and leisure facilities, where there was little competition for either in the immediate area. The cloth towns of the West Riding were surrounded by populous villages where people spun and wove wool into cloth in their cottages for the town markets, and these towns had a large number of people living in the area who could easily be drawn into the town for entertainment.⁶ The factors that influenced the development of race meetings were usually complex and interdependent.

4.1 Length of meetings

A total of 456 race meetings have been found in Yorkshire between 1700-1749. Figure 6 shows that one-day events were the most popular with 192 which represented 42.1% of the total meetings, but this does not signify that any particular place always had one day meetings, rather that in some years any given place had a one day meeting, and in other years it might hold a meeting of between two and four days. It is apparent from Figure 6 that the great majority of one-day events, (153) were held at the minor courses; the total of 39 for York and Hambleton is made up of 36 meetings at Hambleton and only 3 at York. It has been found that 126 race meetings or 27.6% were held for two days, making a total of 69.7% of race meetings lasting for two days or less.⁷ Again, the minor courses, with 108 meetings, were responsible for most of the two-day events. Hambleton held seventeen two-day events, whilst York had only one, and whilst Hambleton had no events longer than two days. York had only nine meetings that were less than five days. For the purpose of this survey, a three-day or longer meeting has been deemed a long race meeting. The races were not always held on consecutive days, and in some cases, there was one day in the middle of the meeting when no race appears to have been organised, although it is possible that due to a lack of competitors a race had to be cancelled. The number of days stated, as the length of the meeting is the total

⁴Borsay Urban renaissance p 11, Borsay wrote that the relationship between an urban centre and its immediate hinterland was a major characteristic of a town's status with regard to industrial and resort development.

⁵Borsay Urban renaissance p 189

⁶Hay pp 230-233

⁷Brailsford found that 8.3% of race meetings, found in T. Fawcener, Sporting Calendar 1773 were one day events, and that 41.1% lasted for two days or less, and concluded that these figures must reflect the nature of eighteenth century race meetings. Brailsford Sport time and society p 70, cf. Vamplew's opinion that most early race meetings were one-day events. Vamplew The sport of kings p 307. This survey found that almost half of the early eighteenth century Yorkshire race meetings lasted for one day.

number of days when races were run during any meeting. 30.3% of all race meetings in Yorkshire between 1700-1749 lasted for three or more days, and of these, 41 meetings, or 9%, were held at York, whilst 97 or 21.3% were held at the minor courses. For 36 years, however, York had race meetings lasting five days or more, and one third of all the four-day race meetings were also at York. The longest recorded meeting was at York which went on for eight race days. Only 19 out of the 51 places where races were held could at any time support a long race meeting. These places are shown in Table 8 together with population figures and some relevant facts regarding the type of facilities that each place offered.

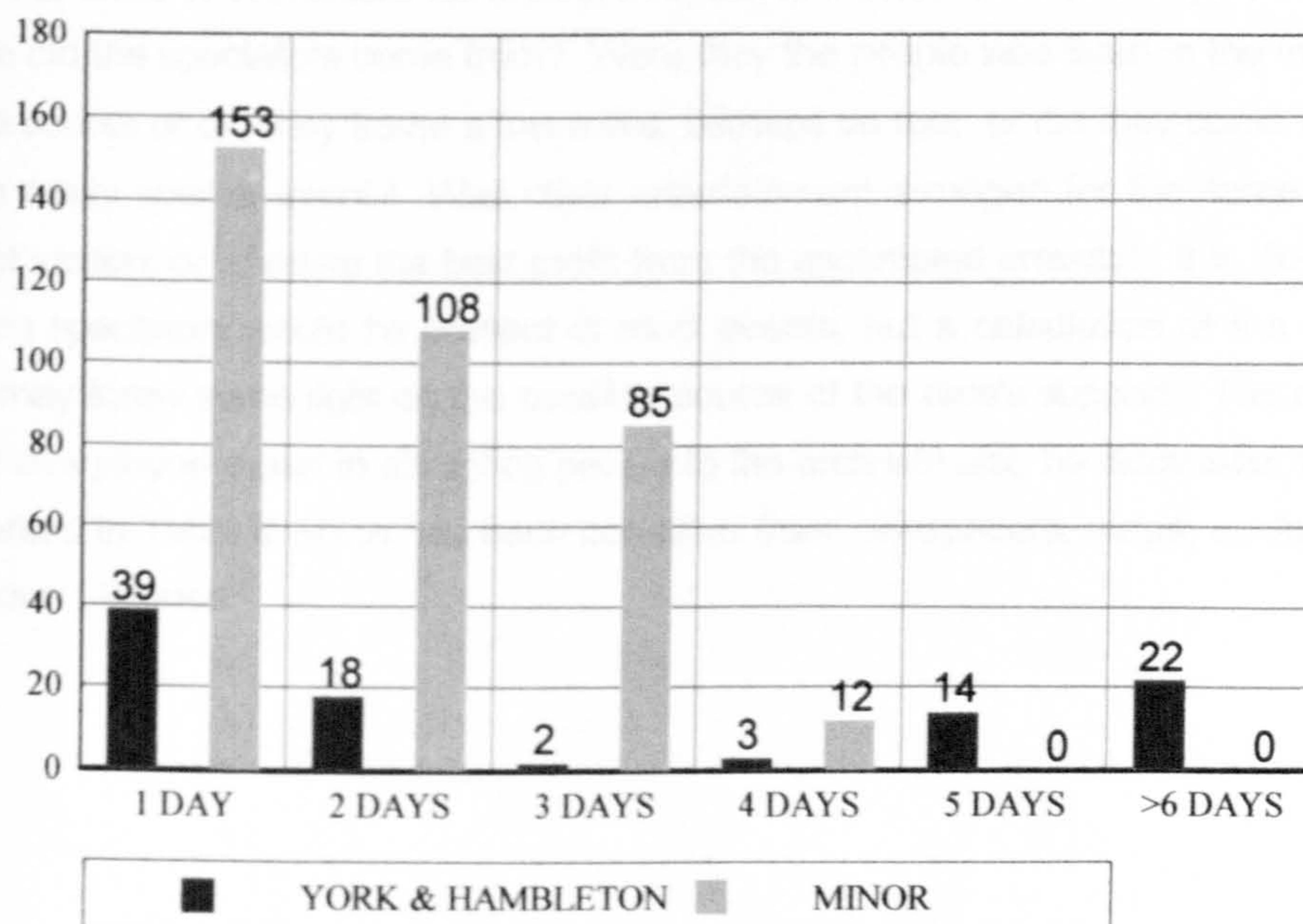


FIGURE 6

LENGTH OF RACE MEETINGS IN YORKSHIRE 1700 -1749

4.2 The factors that governed the length of a race meeting

The factors are said by Borsay to be: the width of the catchment area from which to draw patronage, the status of those who attended, and the sophistication of the facilities that evolved around it.⁸ These factors determined the number and value of the prizes to be offered. The normal pattern of a race meeting was to hold one race on each day, and in order to provide these prizes, a sum of money had to be found. It has been shown in chapter 2 that the usual source of financing the prizes was indirectly from the large gathering of spectators, and when several prizes were offered, it would be necessary to attract even more spectators. Large centres of population had the advantage of a ready-made crowd which did not have to travel far to attend, and which could be informed of the forthcoming event easily without resort to

⁸Borsay, *Town and turf* pp 53-60

expensive publicity.⁹ However, in the early eighteenth century, 80% of the population of England lived outside of towns,¹⁰ and the ability to draw large numbers of country dwellers to an event was probably economically important to racing, and was vital to some of the larger meetings.¹¹

As most race meetings required money to be raised to finance the prizes, however small, then the events needed to attract sponsors who would subscribe cash, either for philanthropic or commercial reasons, and if for the latter, they would want to recoup their outlay from the people who came to watch the races.¹² In order to finance several races it would be essential to attract large numbers of customers for the commercial sponsors. One of the questions that arises is, where did the spectators come from? Were they the people who lived in the immediate vicinity of the course or did they travel a few miles, perhaps on foot, or did they come long distances to see a really special event? Was other entertainment arranged for the same time in order to attract visitors or to make the best profit from the assembled crowds? It is likely that local and visiting spectators would be present at most events, but a calculation of the population of an area may throw some light on the possible source of the race's support. The other factors that may have played a part in attracting people to the area will also be discussed; these factors are presented in Table 8 which has been compiled from newspapers, maps, ecclesiastical returns, and town histories.

⁹Most people probably heard about races by word of mouth only the better off would have access to newspapers.

¹⁰Porter p 11

¹¹Borsay Town and turf p 55

¹²Some gentlemen subscribed annually to local race meetings in almost a paternalistic way. William Wentworth of Woolley subscribed £11-11-6 to Doncaster races annually c.1710, Wentworth pp 159-194. Other prize money came from people with commercial interest in the races.

PLACE	3 DAY+ EVENT	RDRG	POP. (1000s)	ASSEMBLES	BALLS	COCK FIGHTS	CONCERTS	EXHIBITIONS	FAIR/ MARKET	ORDNARIES	QUARTER SESSIONS	ON MAIN SPA ROUTE	SEA BATHING	THEATRE	WALKS	PINS STABLES
ADWALTON		w							1							
ARTINGTON		w							m							
ASKRIGG		n							m							
BARNLEY		w							m							
BEDALE		n							m							
BEVERLEY			4						m							
BIRSTALL		w	7						m							
BISHOP BURTON			<1													
BOROUGHBRIDGE		w							m							
BRADFORD		w	8(10)						m							
BRAMHAM MOOR		w														
BRIDLINGTON			2						m							
CAULKLEY		n														
CHAPEL ALLERTON & LEEDS		w	20						m							
COOLHAM		n	2						m							
DONCASTER		w							m							
FREMINGTON		n							m							
GATHERLEY MOOR		n														
HALIFAX		w	5(28)						m							
HAMBLETON		n														
HEDON			<1						m							
HELMSLEY		n	2						m							
HUNMANBY			<1						m							
KALES DOWN																
KIPLINGCOTES																
KNARESBOROUGH		w							m							
LEEMING LANE		n							m							
LEYBURN		n														
METHLEY		w	<1													
MIDDLEHAM		n							m							
NEW MALTON		n	2						m							
OTLEY		w	3						m							
PENISTONE		w	1						m							
POCKLINGTON									m							
PONTERFRACT		w	4						m							
PUDSEY		w														
RICHMOND		n							m							
RIPON		w							m							
ROTHERHAM		w	4						m							
SCARBOROUGH		n	6						m							
SELBY		w	1						m							
SETTRINGTON																
SHEFFIELD		w	9						m							
STAPLETON		w														
TADCASTER		w	1						m							
TEMPLE NEWSAM		w														
THRSK		n	2						m							
WAKEFIELD		w	6						m							
WETHERBY		w	<1						m							
YARM		n	1						m							
YORK			10						m							

TABLE 8

SITES OF RACE MEETINGS AND RELEVANT FACTORS

4.2.1 Size of population

It is very difficult to assess accurately the size of the population of any place before the national censuses of the nineteenth century, but it is possible to make a fair estimate of the number of people in most towns and villages during the eighteenth century by using the contemporary ecclesiastical returns. In 1743, Thomas Herring, Archbishop of York made a Visitation of his diocese, for which a series of questions was sent to every parish priest.¹³ The area of the diocese of York included all of Yorkshire, excepting those parts which were in the Archdeaconry of Richmond, and the diocese of Chester, and so most of the places studied in this thesis were assessed, although unfortunately not all parishes provided answers, for various reasons.¹⁴ Those places within the Richmond Archdeaconry and the Chester diocese will be assessed here by the Hearth Tax returns of the later seventeenth century in order to provide some idea of the size of their populations.¹⁵ The first question of the Visitation, the only one that concerns this study, asked how many families resided in the parish, and from this, the total population has been estimated by the usual means of allowing that there were between four and five persons per household; the answers are shown in Table 9.¹⁶ The estimated figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

¹³These have been transcribed and published by S.L.Ollard & P.C.Walker eds. Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns YASRS vols. 71, 72, 75, 77 (Leeds 1927-1930) A visitation was a traditional part of the administrative machinery of the Christian Church, going back in principle to Saint Paul, and was designed to assess the performance of the priests. vol. 71 p vi

¹⁴Ollard & Walker vol. 71 pp ix-xi

¹⁵ By the Hearth Tax Returns of 1670-1673 quoted by P.Clark & J.Hosking, Population estimates of English small towns 1550-1851 revised edition (Leicester 1993). This work has used Hearth Tax and Ecclesiastical Censuses to calculate the size of the population of most English small towns, but not villages or larger towns. The national Hearth Tax returns are from 1662-1688, and were compiled from lists of householders and the number of their hearths, made by the parish constables. The lists were given to the local J.Ps. at the Quarter Sessions and the tax was calculated at the rate of two shillings per hearth, although those on poor relief or living in houses worth less than one pound per annum were exempted.

¹⁶Other authors have calculated the population of various Yorkshire towns during the eighteenth century, including the excellent work by Clark & Hosking whose basic methods have been followed here, but as they have not calculated the populations of the villages, and it is not always clear in the case of some parishes, comprising several townships, exactly what area is included, and so this survey has used the 1743 estimates, to calculate individual totals for all of the places that made returns.

TABLE 9

POPULATION ESTIMATES IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FOR PLACES WITH
RACE MEETINGS 1700-1749

(Places with a three day meeting in bold) (* indicates Hearth Tax returns)

PLACE	POPULATION	NOTE
Adwalton	n/a	Part of parish of Birstall pop 7000
Arthington	n/a	Part of parish of Addle pop 1000
Askrigg	n/a	* 1670 pop <1000
Barnsley	n/a	* 1676 pop 2000
Bedale	n/a	* 1670 pop <1000
Beverley	4000	
Birstall	7000	
Bishop Burton	<1000	
Boroughbridge	n/a	*1672 pop <1000
Bradford	5000	
Bramham	<1000	
Bridlington	2000	
Caulkley	n/a	Part of parish of Nunnington pop <1000
Chapel Allerton & Leeds	20000	
Coolham	n/a	* part of parish of ? Long Preston pop 1000
Doncaster	2000	
Fremington	n/a	
Gatherley	n/a	* part of parish of Richmond 1670 pop 1000
Halifax	5000	Town had 5000 but the parish contained 28000
Hambleton	n/a	Part of parish of Cold Kirby, pop <1000
Hedon	<1000	
Helmsley	2000	
Hunmanby	<1000	
Kalesdown	n/a	Site unknown
Kiplingcotes	n/a	Part of parish of Middleton, pop <1000
Knaresborough	n/a	*1672 pop <1000
Leeming Lane	n/a	
Leyburn	n/a	
Methley	<1000	
Middleham	n/a	*1673 pop <1000
New Malton	2000	Site of the racecourse at Langton pop <1000

PLACE	POPULATION	NOTE
Otley	3000	
Penistone	1000	
Pontefract	4000	
Pudsey	n/a	Part of parish of Calverley pop 4000
Richmond	n/a	* 1670 pop 1000
Ripon	n/a	* 1672 pop 1440
Rotherham	4000	
Scarborough	6000	
Selby	1000	
Settrington	<1000	
Sheffield	9000	
Stapleton	n/a	Part of parish of Darrington pop <1000
Tadcaster	1000	
Temple Newsome	n/a	Part of parish of Whitkirk pop n/a
Thirsk	2000	
Wakefield	6000	
Wetherby	<1000	
Yarm	1000	
York	10000	

Table 9 shows that the populations of the places that held long meetings varied from less than 1,000 in the case of Bishop Burton, to 20,000 at Leeds (where its races were held a mile or so down the road at Chapel Allerton), but the table also shows that Sheffield with c. 9,000 inhabitants did not hold a three day event, hence the size of the resident population cannot always have been a determining factor in the length of a race meeting.

4.2.2 The characteristics of racing towns and villages

During the eighteenth century, towns played an essential role in the growth of the entertainment industry.¹⁷ Certain towns provided the facilities for the county's civil administration, and for its social activities, and can be categorised as county or gentry towns. Accommodation and entertainment were necessary when the area's justices met for quarter sessions and the administration of roads, bridges, and the poor law.¹⁸ These towns were usually located in places of strategic importance, often at the confluence of several major trade routes from a

¹⁷Corfield p 51

¹⁸J.S.Cockburn, 'The North Riding justices 1690-1750' YAJ 1965 vol. 41 pp 481-515

diverse and extensive hinterland for which they held markets at more than one site, and more frequently than the weekly market of the typical market town.¹⁹ County towns became affluent by providing a wider range of services than were found elsewhere, and some of the towns also had a traditional industry.²⁰ A town's economic development could depend on its ability to ride out storms, by providing a range of specialised services and industries so that it could offer facilities not available elsewhere in a district.²¹ Many English people enjoyed improved living standards during the eighteenth century and were able to spend money on urban products, particularly on consumer wares that they could obtain in the county towns without the expense and hardship of a journey to London. The county towns made the effort to present an attractive environment to their visitors with the result that many gentry families spent much time there, and rented houses for the developing social season.²² The attractions that the county towns offered, particularly to those people who could afford to spend money conspicuously on luxury and leisure, led to further leisure facilities being provided, so that a recreational calendar evolved for polite society, that did not necessarily follow the popular agricultural-based festivities of the working people.²³ It was just as important to be seen at leisure as it was to have leisure, and this display could be observed best in the county town by the greatest number of people who mattered socially to one another.²⁴ This factor had a significant impact on those towns that were the traditional gathering points and service centres for society.²⁵

By virtue of its size, Yorkshire had a number of county or gentry towns.²⁶ The most important town, York was the main ecclesiastical, judicial, administrative, and social centre of the north of England, and the provincial capital. York was the most prestigious social centre in England after London; its facilities had been built up with the support of the city council and investment by some of the gentry, to be second to none in the provinces.²⁷ Beverley and Doncaster were easily reached centres for the gentry to meet for local administration, legal and social events,

¹⁹P.Clark & P.Slack, English towns in transition 1500-1700 (London 1976) p 27

²⁰Clark & Slack pp 25-29

²¹P.Clark, ed. The transformation of English provincial towns 1600-1800 (London 1984) pp 18-20

²²Clark The transformation of English provincial towns p 22

²³P. Borsay, 'All the town's a stage: urban ritual and ceremony 1660-1800' in P.Clark ed.The transformation of English provincial towns 1600-1800 (London 1984) pp 191-228, 250-251

²⁴Corfield p 52

²⁵Borsay Urban renaissance p 117

²⁶ Yorkshire was the largest county in England before its boundaries were changed in 1974; it had more than 3.75 million acres and accounted for one eighth of the whole country. Hey, p 1

²⁷Borsay Urban renaissance p 30

and as both were over 30 miles from York, they could provide more local facilities to the rural gentry.²⁸

Table 8 has been compiled to show all of the sites that have been found to hold race meetings from 1700 to 1749. The long meetings, the size of population, the riding or district, and the various amenities and factors that may have been advantageous to the development of a horse race meeting have been noted. It can be seen that of the nineteen places listed that had long meetings, ten are in the West Riding, which was one of the more densely populated English regions, with several towns of some size.²⁹ Six places are in the North Riding, and only two are in the East Riding. The East and North Ridings were far more sparsely populated, and so there may not have been enough local people to support several large race meetings.³⁰ The city of York is not part of any Riding, but it is greatly dependent upon the rest of the county to support its position as the centre of the county.³¹ York was one of the largest provincial towns in the early eighteenth century with a population of c10, 000, but the arrival of throngs of visitors probably doubled this number during race week.³² However, Table 8 suggests that the size of a place was not always the major factor in determining the length of the race meeting that it supported

Borsay found that 70% of horse races in England held between 1500 and 1770 took place in market towns.³³ The figure for Yorkshire races between 1700 and 1749 is almost identical i.e. 69%. An average market town probably had a population of 1-2,000 people in the eighteenth century, but there must have been a number of people living within easy reach to support the market's trade and these could all be potential spectators who could support a longer meeting.³⁴ Several Yorkshire market towns were larger than this, but did not have a long race meeting. Barnsley, Bridlington, Helmsley and Otley, all with populations estimated at over 2,000, only had short race meetings. Even some larger places like Bradford and Sheffield with around 5,000 to 9,000 townsfolk had race meetings of only two days duration, whilst some of the smaller places, little more than villages, like Bedale and Boroughbridge, could put on three day events. The reason for some places holding several days of races and others only an occasional day or no races at all, cannot be solely dependant upon population size, and it is

²⁸Borsay Town and turf p 55

²⁹ Plumb England p 11; T.S.Ashton, An economic history of England: the eighteenth century (London 1955) p 12

³⁰Ashton p 12

³¹Hay pp 4, 182

³²Drake pp 169-171

³³Borsay Town and turf p 54

³⁴Porter p 39

necessary to consider the other factors that influenced the ability or desire of a place to promote horse racing which was and still is, a widespread and popular form of amusement for all classes of society.

Four market towns with populations of c 2,000 held long race meetings to coincide with holiday times or fairs. Section 3.2.3 shows that Doncaster, New Malton, Richmond, and Ripon regularly arranged race meetings at traditional holiday times like, Easter, Whitsun or mid-summer. They were all situated on recognised main routes; Malton is on the road to the coast, west from York, and the rest are on the Great North Road which was the principal route for travellers from London to Scotland, and had branches to almost all places between. The long time taken in the eighteenth century for what we now regard as short journeys meant that overnight accommodation was available on most routes, and these four towns already had plenty of guest accommodation available.³⁵ They all had important markets and fairs, and their size meant that they were able to offer a good range of entertainment to visitors including cock fighting; all but Richmond and Boroughbridge had assemblies, although ordinaries were offered there.³⁶ The site of the racecourse at Richmond was easily reached as it was on common land within the town boundary.³⁷ Only New Malton could tempt race-goers to a ball in the evenings, and a small spa in the town.³⁸

Two of the relatively large towns of Yorkshire, Hull and Whitby are notable by their absence from the list of race meetings although their populations were probably in the region of 5,000 and 7,000 respectively.³⁹ In the early eighteenth century, these ports were rather isolated places that were best accessed by water, and neither place was on a major through route to and from anywhere of importance. Hull was on poorly drained, low lying land, which was regularly flooded; the town's staithes were staging posts where cargoes were transferred to and from the efficient river transport systems of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire to deeper water vessels near the Humber Estuary, so that goods could be shipped in and out of Yorkshire. A journey to the south of England involved a long detour west to Ferrybridge or a comfortless ferry trip across the wide, dangerous Humber Estuary.⁴⁰ Access to Whitby by land was difficult, over

³⁵ Hey p 183; Fiennes pp 89, 95, 181

³⁶ YC 7 Apr 1730, 3 Apr 1739, 16 May 1745, 12 Jul 1748; LM 27 Feb 1732

³⁷ R. Harman, Prospect of Richmond 1724; (1724) shows the site of the racecourse. The common fields of Richmond were enclosed following a petition to Parliament in 1752; Page p 23 shows that the racecourse was then probably moved further out of town to Whitcliffe pasture.

³⁸ YC 22 Mar 1743, the spa which was to the west of the town, supplied water with similar properties to the spa water at Scarborough, but Malton spa water was not promoted. N.A. Hudlestone, A history of Malton and Norton (Scarborough 1962) p 145

³⁹ Ollard & Walker vol. 72 pp 76-78, vol. 75 p 207

⁴⁰ G. Jackson, Hull in the eighteenth century (London 1972) pp 10-57; K.J. Allison, The East Riding of Yorkshire landscape (London 1976) pp 21, 27-28

bleak high moorland, and the port was regularly cut off in winter; it was a mining, fishing, shipbuilding and servicing town whose best communications were by sea and it had no inland distribution network.⁴¹ Although Whitby had a spa, and offered a great deal in the way of scenery and recreation, it was unable to attract visitors until the nineteenth century when transport facilities improved.⁴² Both towns were places of commerce where wealthy merchant or manufacturing families formed the social hierarchy, but where few gentry or aristocratic families resided.⁴³ By the mid-eighteenth century, as the Hull merchants became very rich and were able to afford to pursue the same leisure interests as the landed gentry - indeed many of them went on to become landed gentry - it is possible that they promoted the three day races at Hull from 1752.⁴⁴ Improved transport links to Hull enabled people from the surrounding districts to get to town more easily for these races, but by the end of the century, as the merchants became resident country landowners, and spent less time in Hull, the support for the races at Hull declined, and those meetings were no longer held.⁴⁵ Whitby did not have good year round transport links to a huge hinterland to fuel the import/export trade that created the wealth of the Hull merchants,⁴⁶ and may have been too inaccessible to attract racehorse owners to risk walking their animals on the difficult journey over the high, sometimes boggy or frozen, North York Moors, when there were plenty of other more convenient racecourses at which to compete. Sheffield with a population of 9,000 potential spectators only held short meetings, whereas its smaller neighbour Rotherham held long meetings. Sheffield was a dirty industrial place whereas Rotherham was a good stone-built market town on a major route.⁴⁷

Eight places that held some long meetings had populations that were around 1,000 or less; these were Bedale, Bishop Burton, Boroughbridge, Chapel Allerton, Knaresborough, Middleham, Wetherby, and Yarm.⁴⁸ It would have been impossible for the communities of

⁴¹ Alum was mined, and exported by sea for the tanning industry. M.R.G. Conzen, 'The growth and character of Whitby' in G.H. Daysh, ed. *A survey of Whitby and the surrounding area* (Eton 1958) pp 59-60. Whitby's overland trade was mainly by pack-horse until 1788 when a stagecoach service was started, however the passengers on this were advised to make their wills before setting out on this perilous journey! J.T. Sewell, *An account of some medieval roads crossing the moors south and south west of Whitby* (Whitby 1971) p 36; Hay p 189-190; Wilson p 171

⁴² Conzen pp 61-62; R.T. Gaskin, *The old seaport of Whitby* (Whitby 1909) p 443 reproduced a poem published in 1718, by Samuel Jones that praises the Whitby chalybeate spring under West Cliff:

Tunbridge and Epsom shou' to Whitby yield, When thy Recovery to the World's reveal'd; (Fine air'd Montpelier and the German spaw a stranger Alteration saw) Death staring in his Face, impatient stood, But Life restored by this most precious Flood

⁴³ Defoe p 532

⁴⁴ Jackson pp 96-100, 112-115; *YC* 2 Jun 1752

⁴⁵ Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 125, Hull races ended in 1796

⁴⁶ Most of the import/ export trade for the North Riding passed through the ports on the River Tees, particularly Yarm.

⁴⁷ Defoe pp 482-483

⁴⁸ Clark & Hosking passim; Ollard & Walker vol. 71 pp 98, 125, vol. 75 p 227

such small places to provide the prizes, which in some cases amounted to £60 as at Bedale in 1732,⁴⁹ and so other factors must have played a part in the economic viability of their long race meetings. A common factor existed between two villages, Bishop Burton and Chapel Allerton, neither being significant enough to hold a fair or a market, and it must have been their proximity to important towns that provided the resources to draw large crowds. Bishop Burton, an agricultural village, is adjacent to Beverley, the county town of the East Riding and easily reached from Hull. Beverley was a popular race town in its own right with the facilities to entertain the race patrons, but Hull had no races of its own until 1752⁵⁰ so the Hull racegoers had to travel for their race meetings to these nearby places. The situation at Chapel Allerton, another agricultural community,⁵¹ was similar, but on a larger scale, as the 20,000 people who lived in Leeds were less than an hour's walk from the common where the races were run, the food and drink booths, and the entertainment which helped to subsidise the prize money. The races at Chapel Allerton were occasionally called Leeds Races, but were held on Chapeltown Moor, where the Leeds townsfolk regularly went for recreation and games or just to take the fresh air.⁵² Four other small places, Bedale, Boroughbridge, Wetherby, and Yarm held long race meetings at the same time as their fairs, which would have brought more people and money into the towns than would have come for a single event. These towns were in very rural areas, but were locally important for their markets and fairs that drew patrons from a large but thinly populated district. In the eighteenth century, Bedale, like other small market towns, only came to life during its annual fairs and market days.⁵³ Boroughbridge and Wetherby were actually on a major route, but Bedale and Yarm also had good road communications with many other small towns whose people would have been drawn to the fairs and the races. Accommodation for a large number of regular visitors is indicated by the presence of over 50 guest beds at Bedale, Boroughbridge, and Wetherby,⁵⁴ and the many inns on the main street of Yarm, some of which advertised assemblies, ordinaries and cockfights to entertain their patrons.⁵⁵ Wealthy people visited Knaresborough to take the mineral waters at the local springs for medicinal purposes, and both the town and its neighbour Harrogate became noted

⁴⁹Cheny 1732

⁵⁰YC 2 Jun 1752

⁵¹There was almost no manufacturing of wool at Chapel Allerton in the eighteenth century, '...scarcely a single manufacturer of cloth to be found in the whole village...' H. Heaton, The Yorkshire woollen and worsted industries (Oxford 1920) p 284

⁵²LM 29 Apr 1729; J. Ismay, 'A visit to Chapel Allerton and Harewood in 1767' Thoresby Society Publications (Leeds 1945) vol. 37 pp 337-338

⁵³Heaton p 359

⁵⁴Hey p 183

⁵⁵N. Pevsner, Yorkshire: the North Riding (London 1989) pp 406-408; YC 29 Aug 1749. A notice outside the Ketton Ox Inn at Yarm indicates that its top storey was used for cockfights in the eighteenth century.

spas to which people also resorted for pleasure.⁵⁶ A horse race and cockfighting were added incentives to draw trade to the towns and to entertain visitors.⁵⁷ Knaresborough was well situated near the main route north and had a good market and plentiful accommodation in both inns and private houses.⁵⁸ The market towns of the Archdeaconry of Richmond were probably small places that depended upon the outlying areas for trade but several supported race meetings. Askrigg, Fremington, and Leyburn had races, but Bedale and Middleham had long meetings. Defoe wrote:

this area is full of jockeys, that is to say, dealers in horses, and breeders of horses⁵⁹

As this was the centre of the most important English horse breeding district it is not surprising that horse races were organised there to coincide with the local fairs, but there were few facilities in this area; Fremington advertised cockfights, and Askrigg was occasionally visited by strolling players,⁶⁰ but here also the fairs were the main attractions for visitors, and the races there were usually held on fair or holy days.

Five towns where long race meetings were held had populations estimated at between 4,000 and 6,000 people. Beverley, Pontefract, Rotherham, Scarborough, and Wakefield⁶¹ were all pleasant, well built, and appeared relatively prosperous and dependant on trade, for which they were all superbly situated, and they all provided plenty of guest accommodation for overnight visitors.⁶² Beverley, Pontefract, Rotherham and Wakefield were inland ports connected by rivers to Hull,⁶³ whilst Scarborough was a minor port in its own right, but had poor facilities for distributing goods inland and so never developed.⁶⁴ Pontefract, and Rotherham were on the major road routes to Scotland and the south of England, and like Wakefield, they grew up at a site where a bridge took a main road across a deep river.⁶⁵ They were all important for their market facilities and the provision of entertainment for all classes including assemblies,

⁵⁶Fiennes p 93

⁵⁷YC 9 Jun 1730

⁵⁸Defoe pp 506-507; Fiennes pp 92-93; J. Ogilby, Britain or the Kingdom of England and the dominion of Wales actually surveyed (London 1698) plate 88

⁵⁹Defoe p 512

⁶⁰YC 25 Mar 1740; Hartley & Ingilby pp 74, 96

⁶¹Ollard & Walker vol. 71 pp 101-103, vol. 75 pp 3, 133, 185

⁶²Hey p 183

⁶³ Hey p 217; Defoe p 69

⁶⁴S.McIntyre, 'The Scarborough Corporation quarrel 1736-1760', Northern History 14 (1978) pp 208-226

⁶⁵Pontefract is one mile from Ferrybridge where an important bridge crossed the joined Aire and Calder rivers; the Don is crossed at Rotherham, and a famous bridge crossed the Calder at Wakefield. Defoe pp 482-483, 485, 505

ordinaries and cockfights,⁶⁶ but Beverley and Wakefield became centres for the local gentry to meet for more sophisticated social activities. Balls, concerts, and plays were regularly patronised by the middle classes and gentry.⁶⁷ Scarborough's superior social activities including the race meetings, were certainly provided for the amusement of visitors who came mainly from the north of England and Scotland to take the waters at the famous Spa. As well as the medicinal facilities, there were assemblies, balls, cock-fights, the newly fashionable sea bathing, a theatre, walks and rides and carriage drives to see the impressive scenery of the area.⁶⁸

The largest towns in Yorkshire were Halifax, Leeds and York.⁶⁹ All three held long race meetings and were on the eastern part of the main post route that started at Plymouth, and went through Liverpool before ending at Hull.⁷⁰ Although Leeds and the environs of Halifax each had more than 20,000 inhabitants and were roughly twice the size of York with c10, 000 people, these larger towns were unable to hold long race meetings as regularly as York, nor were their meetings continued over so many days as York's. Neither town could rival the provincial capital as a specialist provider of leisure facilities, although Halifax and Leeds had regular assemblies and cockfights,⁷¹ and Leeds boasted a theatre,⁷² however York could offer so much more; social breakfasts, ordinaries, concerts, exhibitions, and walks as well a large range of shops providing luxury goods.⁷³ Quarter sessions were held at all three towns,⁷⁴ and these were important opportunities for the gentry to meet,⁷⁵ but York was also the seat of ecclesiastical authority, county government and the assizes, which were attended by all the important and would-be-important people of Yorkshire. York was said by Drake, its eighteenth century chronicler, to allow many liberties to Roman Catholics to encourage them to contribute to the commerce of the city.⁷⁶ Many of the leading and wealthiest Nidderdale and

⁶⁶YC 29 Apr, 27 May 1740

⁶⁷YC 12 Aug 1740, 3 May 1743; K. Allison, ed. A history of the county of York: East Riding, The Victoria History of the Counties of England vol. 6 (London 1989) p 132

⁶⁸J.B.Baker, A history of Scarborough (Scarborough 1882) pp 385-402; Defoe p 532

⁶⁹Ollard & Walker vol. 71 p x, vol. 72 pp 31,140-145, vol. 71 pp 4,121,122,162,163

⁷⁰Defoe p 486

⁷¹Borsay Urban renaissance p 341; LM 10 Apr 1739

⁷²LM 12 Apr 1743

⁷³Defoe pp 520-521; Borsay Urban renaissance pp 140-144

⁷⁴LM 6 Jun 1738, 6 Jun 1727

⁷⁵P. Laslett, The world we have lost (London 1971) p 11

⁷⁶Drake p 241

Richmondshire families were Recusants,⁷⁷ and it is notable that some of the racehorse owners, like the Constables of Everingham,⁷⁸ the Brights, Gascoignes, Stapletons and Vavasours⁷⁹ were Roman Catholic. The races at York were particularly timed to take advantage of the enormous crowds that thronged to the entertainment that had become part of the judicial events.⁸⁰ In 1708, the York Corporation speculated that

the making of a yearly horse-race ... may be of advantage and profit to the city... and made a financial contribution towards the races.

Their commercial initiative was well rewarded, and by 1736, Drake reported that thousands of pounds were spent annually at race time in the town. The city arranged for land to be drained and a new racecourse to be laid out in time for the 1731 meeting, which resulted in York having one of the finest courses in England.⁸¹

Drake wrote:

Twice in the year the assizes...are held here. On which occasion, besides the men of business, did formerly resort a great number of our northern gentry to partake of the diversions that were usually set up in the city for that time. Of late years this is altered: and the grand meeting of the nobility and gentry of the north and other parts of England is now at York, in or about the month of August: drawn thither by the hopes of being agreeably entertained for a week, in horse-racing, balls, assemblies etc.⁸²

It seems likely that by this time the races had supplanted the assizes as the focus of the social season for the gentry, and the working people who would not be actively involved with the assizes could participate in the free spectacle and excitement of the race meeting.

4.2.3 Accommodation for visitors

If horse races had been attended only by people who lived within a few hours journey, then no accommodation would have been required for the horses' owners, their staff and the other

⁷⁷Hey p 173

⁷⁸P. Roebuck, Yorkshire baronets 1640-1760 (London 1980) p 154

⁷⁹Roebuck pp 205, 57

⁸⁰The dates of the races were altered in 1720 when the date of the assizes was found to be later than had been expected.
LG 9 Jul 1720

⁸¹ Drake p 241

⁸² Drake p 241

spectators who went to the races. It is clear that at York and many other race towns, the corporations were well aware that the pursuit of leisure attracted visitors and trade and so they promoted the races. Plentiful accommodation at inns and lodging houses was a vital factor in deciding the success and length of a race meeting as people would not spend several days in a place where there were no facilities for them. The information on beds and stabling for visitors has been obtained from the 1686 War Office returns.⁸³ The innkeepers were able to take advantage of the races to provide the visitors with stabling, lodging and catering.⁸⁴ Keeping an inn could be an expensive business; in some areas the condition of obtaining a licence was to guarantee to provide stables, accommodation, and food for travellers, but there was a major disadvantage - they were expected to be able to billet troops for the standing army that had no inland barracks before the Napoleonic wars, and the presence of soldiers greatly discouraged ordinary travellers.⁸⁵ Any opportunity like a fair or horse race allowed the innkeepers the potential to increase trade by setting up booths for supplying drinks beyond the controls of the local licensing laws,⁸⁶ and the publicans displayed a very businesslike approach to encouraging recreational activities for their own ends by their involvement in organising horse races and other entertainment.⁸⁷ The innkeepers were always actively involved in the arrangements for the races by providing facilities for registering the entry of the competing horses and they usually had a monopoly both on stabling the competing horses for several days before the races, and providing refreshments during and after the events.⁸⁸ A few local gentry families will have provided some hospitality for friends and family, but most people would have had to find commercial lodgings such as those advertised specifically for gentlemen and their servants by Mr. Kerrigan in Stonegate, York.⁸⁹

Towns had provided entertainment like assemblies and dinners for many years in winter, but as people came to expect more from their leisure time it was realised that towns had little to offer in the way of recreation in summer, and as people travelled to resorts and spas, so the towns had to find a means to compete for trade. A second cycle of fashionable leisure developed in some towns, which may have been based on the assizes, as at York, or a fair for lesser places, as fairs became increasingly recreational, and society looked forward to meeting at different places to follow outdoor pursuits. The further people travelled for leisure the more the

⁸³ Public Record Office WO/3/48, quoted in Hey p 183

⁸⁴ Borsay Urban renaissance p 218-219

⁸⁵ P. Clark, The English alehouse: a social history 1200-1830 (London 1983) pp179-181

⁸⁶ Clark Alehouse p 200

⁸⁷ Clark Alehouse pp 205, 234

⁸⁸ Numerous examples are available from the newspapers e.g. YC 25 Mar 1740

⁸⁹ YC 31 Aug 1731

availability of adequate accommodation became a priority, and before purpose-built facilities were provided, visitors had to make do with what already existed, so that those places with inns, stables and eating houses were ahead in the competition for recreational visitors.⁹⁰ Table 8 shows that almost all of the places that held three-day or longer race meetings had a large number of inns whose trade would have been directly concerned with the races. The places indicated as having inns and accommodation are those that are in the War Office returns for 1686, and give some indication of the amount of lodging available.⁹¹ The innkeepers contributed money towards the prize fund, and in return, the owners of the competing horses were obliged, for a specified number of days before the races, to use their livery facilities, thus enabling the innkeeper to recoup and make a profit from their contribution.⁹² The inns were mainly used by travellers for most of the year but at race times they could be sure of a busy time supplying accommodation, food, drink, and stabling to men and horses, as well as providing cockpits where the race-goers often spent their mornings gambling on the bloody battles which were regularly an ancillary event to the races.⁹³ The inns at the places where long meetings were held always offered great feasts or ordinaries for the better-off spectators, and evening assemblies, where dancing, card playing and socialising of a more sophisticated nature went on. The largest number of inns were situated along main roads, at the junctions of routes, and river crossings such as at Wetherby and Doncaster.⁹⁴

4.2.4 Communications

It was usually necessary to have large numbers of people who would spend enough money over the race days to make a long meeting profitable,⁹⁵ therefore easy access to the racecourse was an essential factor in the economic development of a race meeting. Local people could get to the race course on foot, by road or footpaths, but throughout the eighteenth century, most people who travelled long distances utilised some kind of horse power, and so a good road may have been a relevant factor in getting the spectators to the races. At this time, however, road travel was often difficult, and regularly impossible in winter, because the roads were of such poor quality, partly because of the materials used, and partly because road maintenance was uneconomic.⁹⁶ There was no continuous authority to ensure that the roads

⁹⁰Borsay Urban renaissance pp 142-143

⁹¹W.B. Stephens, Sources for English local history (Cambridge 1983) p 155

⁹²YC 21 Jul 1729

⁹³ YC 25 Mar 1740

⁹⁴Defoe pp 505, 481

⁹⁵Hambleton and Newmarket were unusual in that they do not appear to have been dependent upon plebeian support. Vamplew The turf p 18

⁹⁶W. Albert, The turnpike road system in England 1663-1840 (Cambridge 1972) pp 8, 14-16; any cinders, gravel, stone, sand or chalk that could be acquired was used to fill holes and make the surface. There was little drainage. K.A. MacMahon, Roads and turnpike trusts in eastern Yorkshire (beverley 1964) pp 8-9,10-11

were kept in any fit state for traffic, and road conditions varied considerably from parish to parish.⁹⁷ In bad weather the main routes were negotiable only with the utmost difficulty, and minor routes were virtually closed; even in the London area, the roads were said to be an impassable gulf of mud, and that it was like living on a rock in the middle of the ocean.⁹⁸ The situation in the provinces was probably much worse. The basis for the responsibility for road repair was, until the nineteenth century, an Act of 1555, with various amendments.⁹⁹ The inhabitants of each parish were responsible for repairing the roads within that parish. This was obviously an unsatisfactory state of affairs, particularly as the smaller parishes had difficulty in repairing major routes like the Great North Road, which might happen to run across their land, and as the law compelled all parishes to be responsible for the roads within their boundaries,¹⁰⁰ by the eighteenth century, the country's roads were in the same condition, if not worse, than in Tudor times. A system of maintaining the roads by compelling those who used them to bear the cost was devised in the seventeenth century, and tolls were collected from the travellers, but this only happened in a few places, and it was not until 1735 that the system began to be used in Yorkshire. By 1750, many main routes in Yorkshire had been greatly improved by these turnpike road trusts,¹⁰¹ but most roads remained as they had been for centuries. Thus for most of the period studied, the majority of the roads of Yorkshire were usually badly maintained, and it is unlikely that even the Great North Road, that ran from London via Doncaster, north to Scotland, was easily travelled, except for a few stretches.¹⁰²

The relationship between the road network and the places where long race meetings were found has been examined. Map 1 has been drawn using information taken from maps of Yorkshire produced in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The maps selected are by John Ogilvy, Herman Moll and Thomas Kitchin. Ogilvy's was the earliest survey of the major routes of England and Wales, and was first published in 1675, although several editions were reprinted during the early eighteenth century.¹⁰³ The sections that show Yorkshire have

⁹⁷ J. Copeland, Roads and their traffic 1750-1850 (Newton Abbot 1968) pp 11-12, the cloth manufacturers of the West Riding complained to Parliament in 1740 that the roads were virtually impassable in winter causing serious difficulties to trade.

⁹⁸ Copeland p 13 quotes Lord Henry referring to the roads at Kensington in 1736

⁹⁹ Other Acts were passed in 1563, 1575-6 and 1587; Copeland p 13; 2 & 3 Philip and Mary c8; D.M. Palliser, The age of Elizabeth: England under the later Tudors 1547-1603 (London 1983) p 270; 5 Eliz c 13; Albert, pp 14-15; S. & B. Webb The story of the King's Highway (London 1963) pp 14-15

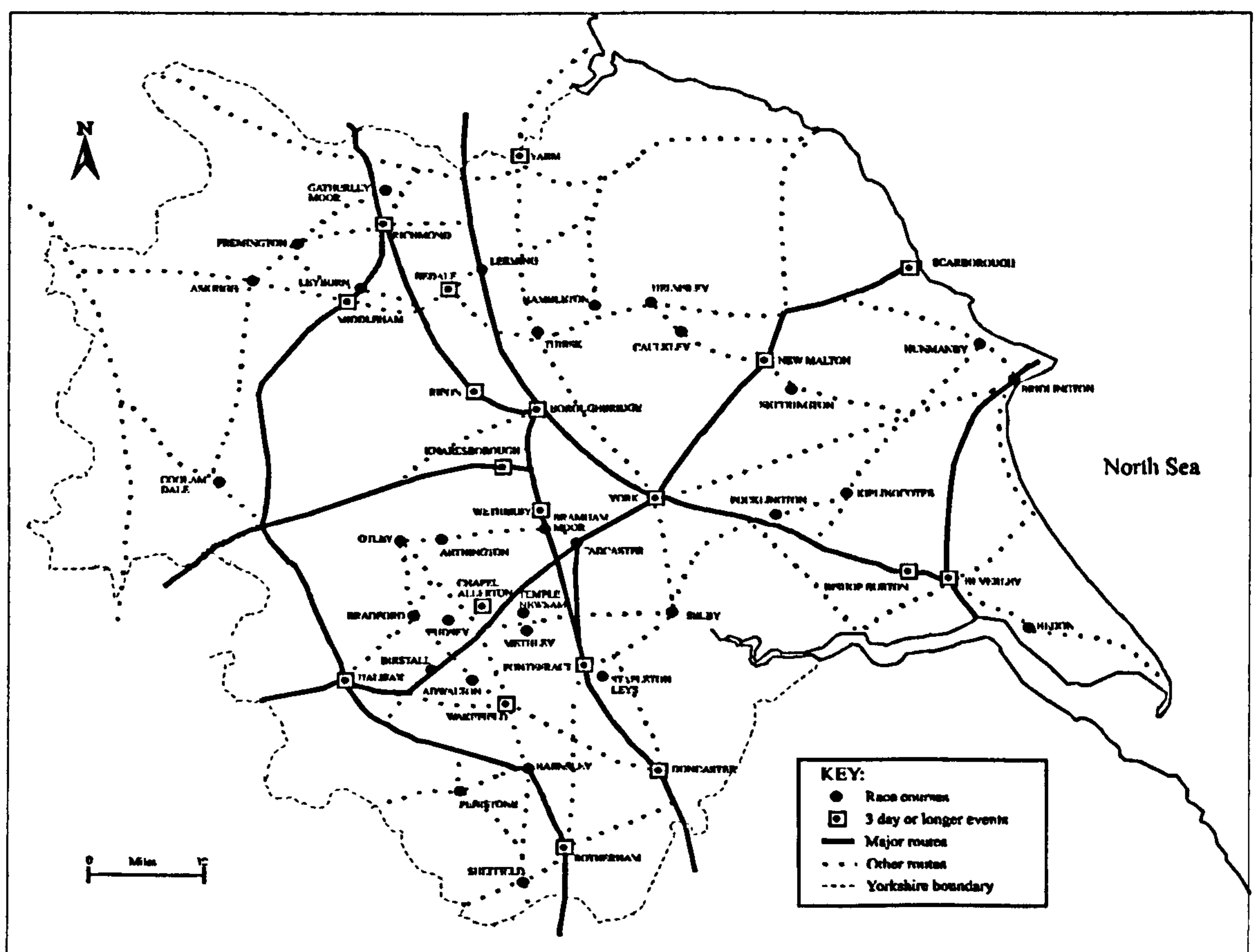
¹⁰⁰ Copeland p 14

¹⁰¹ Albert pp 18-19, 32-33, 204-205; MacMahon Roads passim

¹⁰² Cattle from Scotland were driven along this road to the London markets R.Unwin, Wetherby: the history of a Yorkshire market town (Wetherby 1986) p 59; Defoe p 482 stated that few stretches were in good repair

¹⁰³ J.E. Rawnsley, Antique maps of Yorkshire and their makers (Guisley 1976) p 11

been reproduced here,¹⁰⁴ together with information from the maps of the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire produced by Herman Moll in 1724, and the map of the North Riding of Yorkshire made by Thomas Kitchin in 1749, to show the relevant roads and details.¹⁰⁵ Several surveyors published maps of England during the early eighteenth century, and these show a good network of roads that criss-crossed the country. There were probably almost as many roads then as there are now, although some of them would have resembled pathways, and they would certainly be impassable in bad weather. There is no agreement between the cartographers about the importance or quality of roads; some roads are marked in solid lines by one, but only as dotted lines by another, which probably signifies that one man designated a road as of lesser importance than another, but the quality of any given road varied from year to year, dependant on the prevalent weather conditions at the time. There were probably few new roads built during the eighteenth century; the turnpike roads were not always newly constructed, but they were often greatly improved old roads.¹⁰⁶



MAP 1

YORKSHIRE ROADS AND RACE MEETINGS 1700-1749

¹⁰⁴Ogilby plates 7, 8, 42, 47, 48, 49, 88, 89, 95, 99

¹⁰⁵These are reproduced in Rawnsley pp 20, 28

¹⁰⁶Hey p 217

Map 1 shows the roads that were probably the most important locally and nationally.¹⁰⁷ It can be seen that fifteen of the nineteen places where long meetings have been identified were directly on main routes, and of the remaining four, Bedale, Chapel Allerton, and Yarm, were not far from important roads, and Wakefield was in the centre of a minor road system. The map shows that of the 32 places that held meetings of less than three days, only seven were on main routes, and 25 were on other roads. A total of 22 out of 51 racecourses were on main routes in the county. It is not clear whether the races were held because these places had good communications, or whether the place was important enough to have a good road network for other reasons, which also meant that it was able to support a long race meeting. The map shows that every place that has been identified as having a race meeting of any kind is either on, or very close to, an important road surveyed in the early eighteenth century, even though some of the places like Hambleton were 300 m. above sea level, and those roads can have been little more than tracks. Four places that were mostly moorland were race sites in the eighteenth century, but of these, Bramham Moor, Stapleton Leys, and Hambleton were three of the first places in Yorkshire to run Royal Plate races in 1702, 1703 and 1708¹⁰⁸ respectively, and Gatherley Moor had been a racecourse for at least a century.¹⁰⁹ Gatherley Moor and Bramham Moor are each at the junction of two roads that had been important since Roman times,¹¹⁰ and the Great North Road crossed both places. Drake used an engraving showing the busy post road that crossed Bramham Moor en route to Scotland in his *Eboracum*, reproduced here as Figure 7.¹¹¹ It can be seen as a raised causeway, and a significant commercial route. Stapleton Leys was not a regular race site, but was close to the road to Ferrybridge. Hambleton was not on a major route but was regularly used as a site for a prestigious Royal Plate, and although it had no infrastructure, facilities, or civic support it was able to hold two-day events for 17 years and one day meetings for 36 years.¹¹² An illustration showing Hambleton in 1720 is reproduced here as Figure 8, which suggests that although it lacked many amenities, nevertheless it did have a proper winning post and scales. Once the Crown-subsidised Royal Plate race was transferred to other courses, then Hambleton was unable to sustain its once safeguarded prime position in the racing calendar, when it was specifically promoted by Parliament as a racecourse in the legislation of 1739.¹¹³ The last Royal Plate run

¹⁰⁷Ogilby's book was reprinted many times and was the only route plan available for many years; most maps did not show roads before this time.

¹⁰⁸LG 6 Aug 1702, 19 Jul 1703, 24 Jun 1708

¹⁰⁹Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 169

¹¹⁰Bramham is at the junction of the two main Roman roads in Yorkshire, W. Pearson, 'Bramham Moor and the Red, White and Brown battles' *YAJ* 1995 vol. 67 pp 23-70; H. Speight, *Romantic Richmondshire* (London 1897) p 179

¹¹¹Defoe p 505

¹¹²Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 40 illustrates the Hambleton course painted by Wootton dated 1720, showing the facilities.

¹¹³12 Geo II c19 f2

at Hambleton was in 1775 when only five horses entered, and as the number of competitors had been in decline for some years the prize was transferred to York in 1776, and only occasional races were then run at Hambleton.¹¹⁴ Its famous turf is now regularly used as a racehorse training ground.

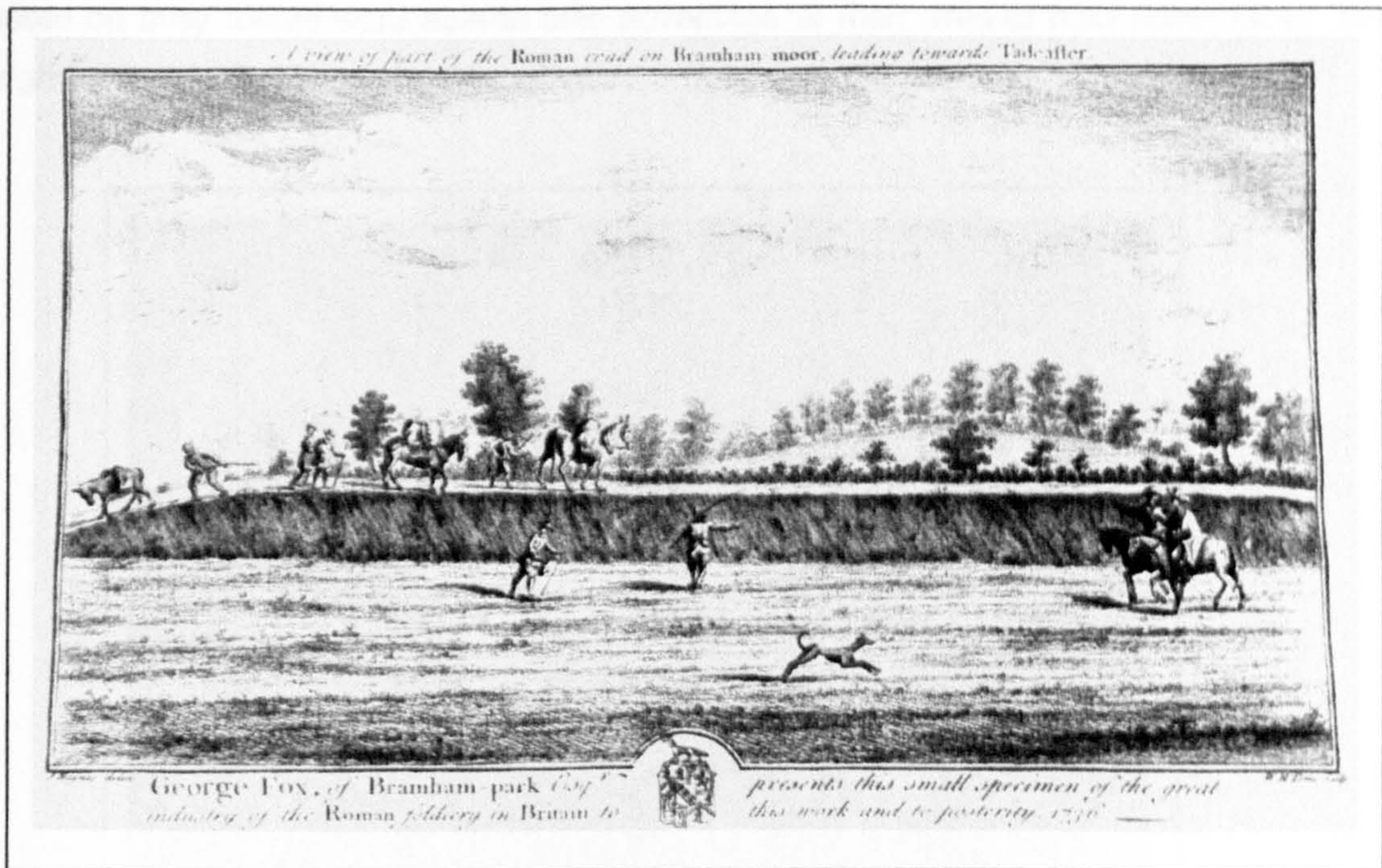


FIGURE 7

THE ROAD ACROSS BRAMHAM MOOR 1736
From F.Drake Eboracum

The county of Yorkshire covered a large area that was drained by several rivers, most of which flowed from the north and west towards the Humber Estuary and the North Sea.¹¹⁵ These watercourses converged from the centre of England and effectively separated large tracts of the land, so that the bridges that carried the roads across the water were an essential part of the infrastructure of the county's trade. The sites around the bridges were often places where trade flourished, as people met there for various purposes including horse races. 23 of the 49 known racecourses were close to bridges that carried important roads over significant watercourses. Most of these racecourses were in important centres of trade in their own right like York or Leeds, but some others were in insignificant villages that had neither fairs nor markets of their own but were close to bridges, Fremington was close to a bridge over the River

¹¹⁴ W.Pick, *The turf register and sportsman's and breeder's stud book* (York 1803) vol.1 pp 100-127; racing at Hambleton ended in 1811 Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 70

¹¹⁵ Hey p 9

Swale, and Methley's bridge spanned the River Calder.¹¹⁶ Stapleton Leys, a tiny place, was close to the bridge that carried the Great North Road across the River Calder at a major road junction for travellers in the north of England, and it may have been chosen as the site for a Royal Plate in 1703 for this reason.¹¹⁷ Those populous towns that had poor land communications did not have long race meetings whilst some very small villages that were situated on busy routes were able to take advantage of their sites to hold horse races, even though these might only be short meetings.

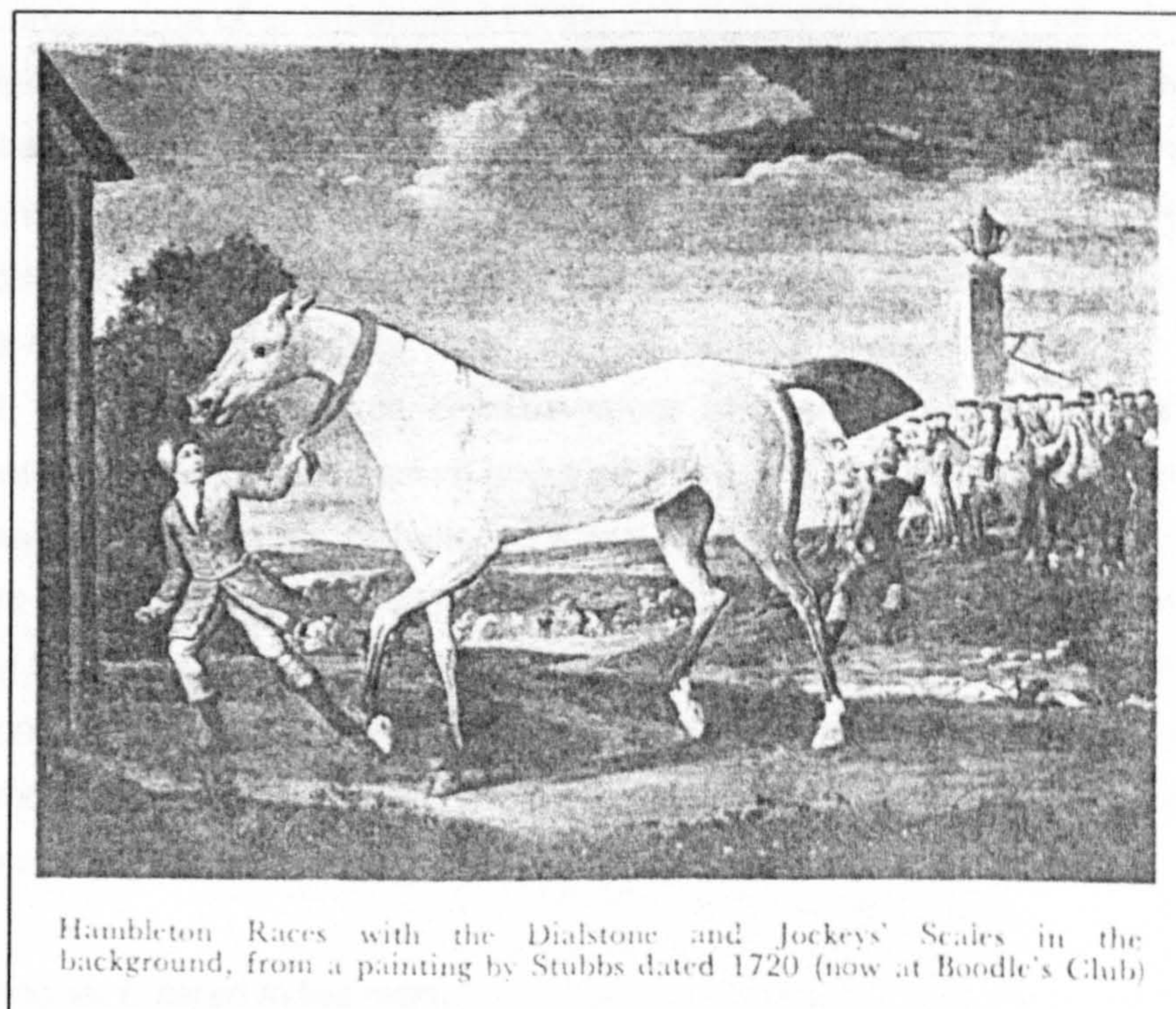


FIGURE 8

HAMBLETON RACES BY J.WOOTTON 1720
From J.Fairfax Blakeborough Northern turf history vol.1

4.2.5 Entertainment facilities

Facilities for entertainment associated with race meetings varied enormously. There was no entry charge to any race meeting in the eighteenth century,¹¹⁸ so watching the race was a free entertainment, which in some cases was held in conjunction with a fair, and the facilities for the events were combined. It is probable that food and drink were on sale at all meetings, but the

¹¹⁶H.S. Darbyshire & G.D. Lumb, eds. The history of Methley Thoresby Society Publications vol. 35 (Leeds 1937) p 84

¹¹⁷LG 19 Jul 1703

¹¹⁸Vamplow The turf p 18. Most races were held on commons or public land so access could not be prevented to people, but they were not allowed to bring horses on the land without permission, and sometimes a charge was made for the horse, to try to deter non-competitors on horses from damaging the ground. YC 3 Aug 1742

longer meetings that were promoted by towns had to be able to offer better attractions to induce large numbers of people who had leisure time and money to attend. Almost all of the places found to hold long meetings were able to offer some other social occasion to entertain the better-off race patrons whereas most of the very small meetings did not provide any additional diversions for the race patrons. Borsay has shown that entrepreneurs were readily attracted by the commercial potential of cultural investment and so consumer demand was speedily turned into material reality.¹¹⁹

The ideal programme of entertainment for the rich eighteenth century race patron was to attend the cockfights that took place in the mornings, or promenade along the newly laid out walks and take coffee or tea. They went to the races in the afternoons, and at night attended an assembly, which at the least would be an occasion when people met and drank tea, talked, and perhaps played cards, and at its best was a glittering social event - a grand dinner and a ball where the cream of high society could see and, equally important, be seen.¹²⁰ In the early eighteenth century, polite society needed places to meet socially as part of their leisure.¹²¹ People would know their neighbours and visit them, but at this time few houses had rooms large enough to hold parties or balls, so these were normally public occasions. Visitors to a town might not know anyone of their own social standing, and would not have time in a short stay to get to know others, and it was normally difficult to meet people socially without proper introductions, but at assemblies, introductions could be made by the master of ceremonies without embarrassment.¹²² The Gentleman's Magazine told of the unseemly interest shown in a stranger at a Yorkshire assembly in 1734:

No sooner entered in the room
But whispers fly - whence does he come
Who or what is he? Can you guess?
Or what estate does he possess?
Who introduced or brought him here?¹²³

Public assemblies became very fashionable between 1710-1720 when they were often amateur affairs with a local gentleman acting as master of ceremonies, and taking tea, dancing, playing

¹¹⁹Borsay Urban renaissance p 219

¹²⁰Borsay Urban renaissance p 144 quotes Drake p 241

¹²¹Girouard p 77

¹²²Girouard pp 130-132

¹²³GM Dec 1734 p 696, quoted by Girouard p 133

cards, and conversation were the genteel activities carried on there.¹²⁴ The grandest occasions in Yorkshire were to be found at York during race week. Defoe wrote of York in 1726:

there is an abundance of good company here...the keeping up assemblies among the younger gentry was first set up here¹²⁵

And in 1730 Simon Scrope, a Yorkshire gentleman, wrote in his diary:

Tomorrow we set out for York...to join the great doings of the week, the like of which no town or city can compare for gaiety, sports, and company all of one mind. Every year there be more noble lords, gentle dames, and commoners of high and low degree at York for the races, the cockings, assemblies, and meetings of horse-coursers and hunters.¹²⁶

Between 1730 and 1732 the York race meeting had been taken in hand by the city corporation, and the principal leisure facility by the gentry, so that the York race week would proceed in a proscribed and dignified manner. The old racecourse, on land that was subject to flooding, was on common pasture at Clifton Ings, and was 'intercommoned', or shared with neighbouring townships. It appears to have been deliberately abandoned as a racecourse by the York Corporation, who later claimed to have misunderstood the intentions of the other owners, in favour of a new course on the Knavesmire.¹²⁷ This new site was on common pasture in the Ainsty, which was controlled entirely by the city of York. Telford drained Knavesmire at the corporation's expense for the race meeting of 1731,¹²⁸ and by this means, the corporation of York acquired complete control over the races. At about the same time, the Earl of Carlisle and other leading society figures set about improving the entertainment facilities, and bringing the focus of the social scene directly under their own stewardship.¹²⁹ They built a magnificent set of assembly rooms that were financed by public subscription, and these were opened for the first time during the premier rendezvous of northern polite society in 1732 - York race week.¹³⁰ The building was designed by the prestigious amateur architect Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, who had a house at Londesborough, East Yorkshire. Burlington's

¹²⁴Girouard pp 127-131

¹²⁵Defoe p 520

¹²⁶Borsay Urban renaissance p 192 quotes Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 3 p 31

¹²⁷Tillott pp 498-499

¹²⁸Drake p 241

¹²⁹Girouard p 134

¹³⁰YC 8 Aug 1732

magnificent building is illustrated here as Figure 9. The spectacular Great Room shown in Figure 10 was designed to resemble an Egyptian hall and the entire building, with extra facilities, was decorated lavishly to show the status of the company. Alexander Pope congratulated Lord Burlington writing:

I hear with pleasure from Mr. Bethell, that the finest thing he ever beheld, in spite of Italy, is your Egyptian Hall at York: And Bethell is an honourable man!¹³¹

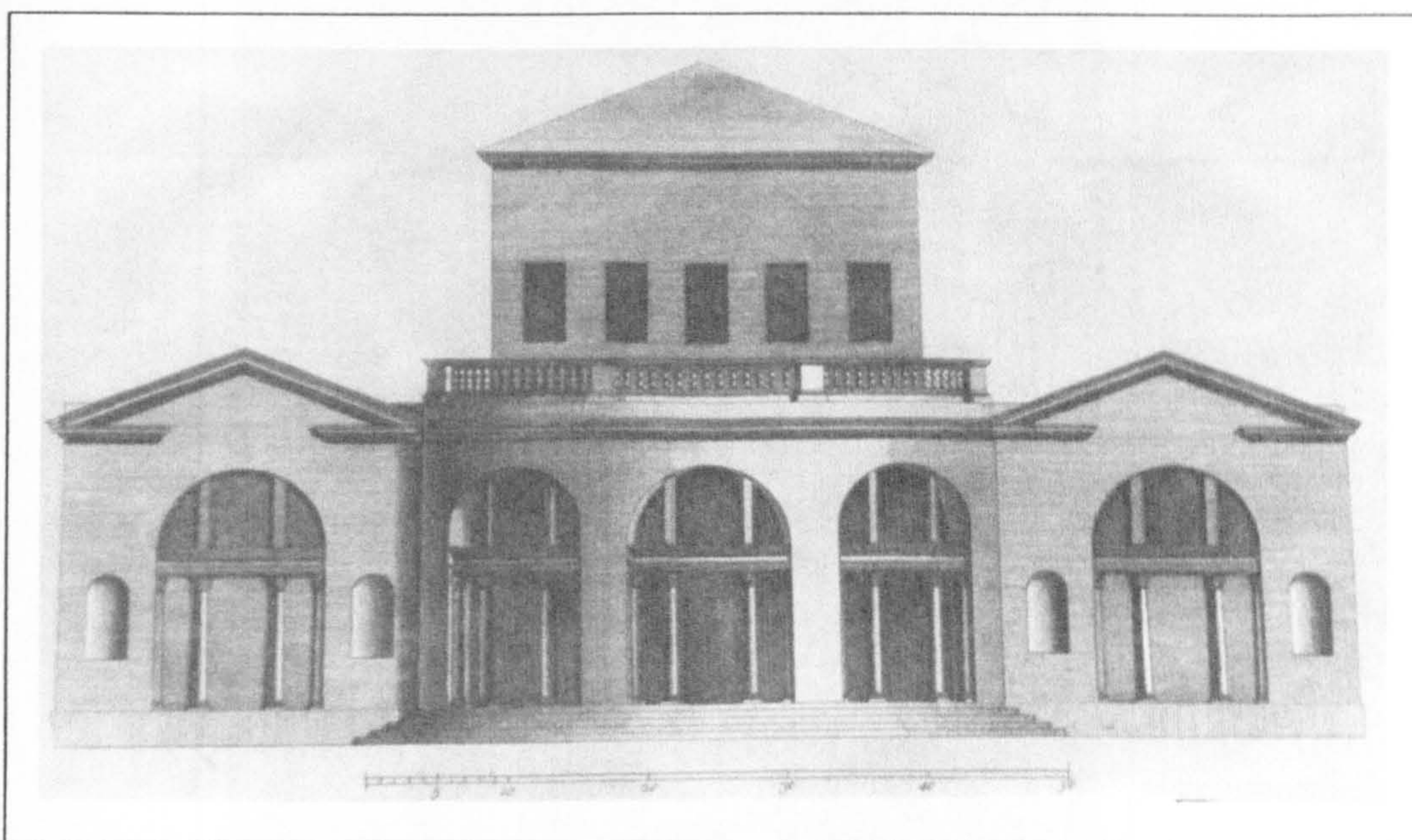


FIGURE 9

YORK ASSEMBLY ROOMS 1732
From F.Drake Eboracum

The list of investors who subscribed sums between £25 and £50 to the building fund includes everyone who was anyone in the north of England.¹³² The venture was a huge success and dividends were regularly paid out after 1736.¹³³ Drake who was immensely proud of the building and of its financing, wrote:

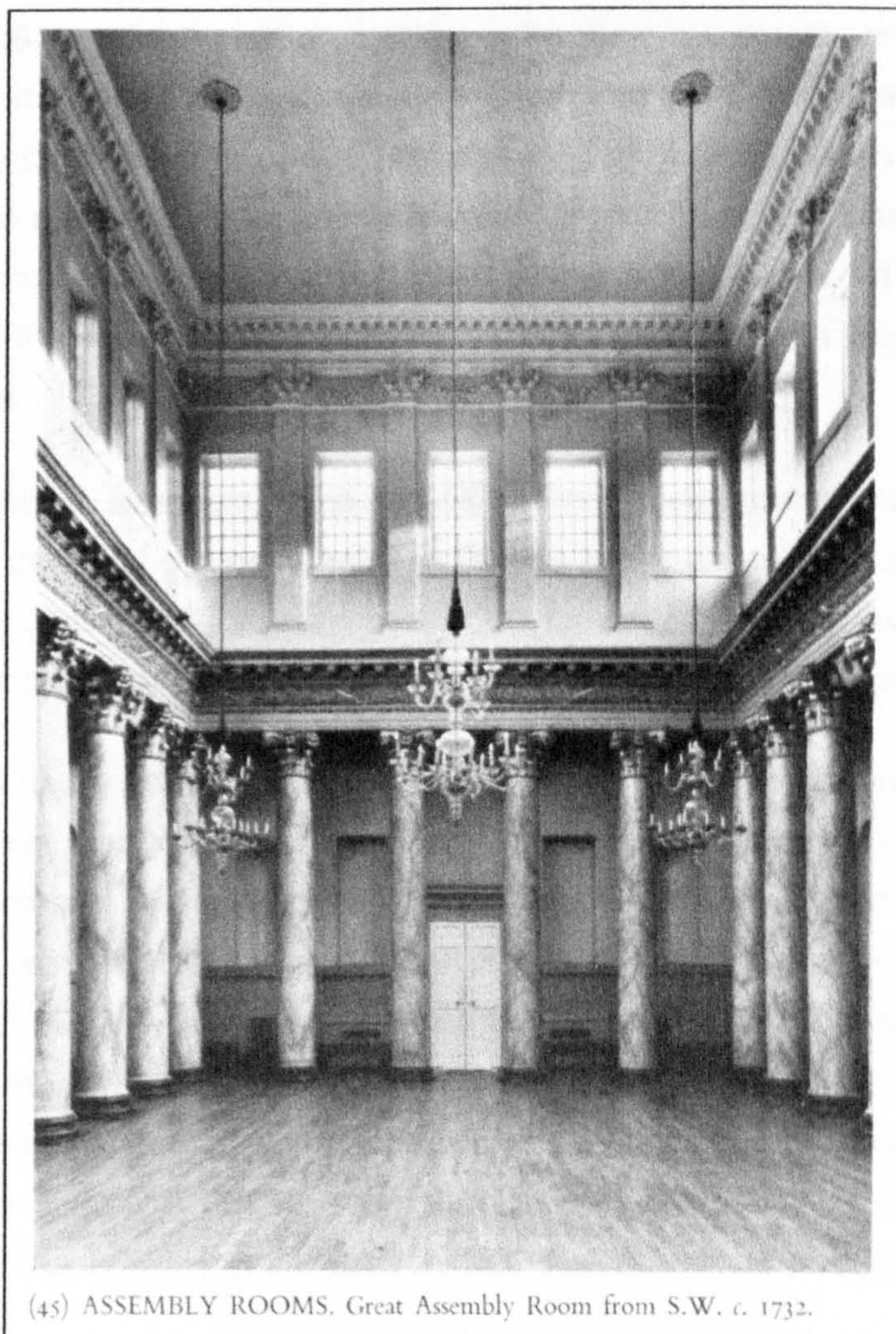
a magnificent assembly room for the gentry of the city to meet in throughout the year and for the entertainment of the nobility, gentry etc. who usually honour our horseraces with their presence...the subscription met with great

¹³¹A.Pope, *The correspondence of Alexander Pope* ed., G.Sherburn (Oxford 1956) vol. 3 p 313

¹³²List of subscribers Drake appendix iix; Tillott p 531, The requisite number of subscribers was quickly found and after 1736, they regularly received dividends on their investment. By 1747, the assembly rooms had lost some of their popularity.

¹³³Tillott p 531

encouragement from the nobility and of the county and several other parts of the kingdom...yet no gentleman can be uneasy when at the small bequest of twenty-five pound, he is a proprietor in one of the finest rooms in Europe.¹³⁴



(45) ASSEMBLY ROOMS. Great Assembly Room from S.W. c. 1732.

FIGURE 10

YORK ASSEMBLY ROOMS - INTERIOR 1732

From Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, York, historic buildings in the central area

The fact that the gentry owned the premises allowed them to dictate the pattern of the main social events as they wished, and also excluded commercial interference; the patrons paid one guinea to use the facilities whilst at the races, in addition to their other expenses.¹³⁵

¹³⁴Drake p 241

¹³⁵YC 8 Aug 1732

Many of the larger towns held assemblies during race week in buildings connected with inns, or in public rooms, such as at Wakefield in part of the White Hart Inn,¹³⁶ and at Barnsley where The Free School was used.¹³⁷ The genteel social atmosphere created at the assemblies where the more affluent race patrons could meet in comfort and display their wealth and status, whilst playing cards, taking refreshment or dancing in the most respectable company, quickly made these meetings immensely popular. Goods and services were doubly valued in an acquisitive society, not only for their intrinsic worth, but also for their publicly observed use and display.¹³⁸ Assemblies were an easy way for people to meet others of a similar class and to observe and copy the ways and manners of society at a time when respectable mixed social occasions were rarely found in the provinces.¹³⁹ In 1722, Macky described with approval, how the York assemblies were:

great helps to strangers, for in a week by their means you become acquainted with all the good company, male or female in the place.... These assemblies are very convenient for young people; for formerly the county ladies ...seldom saw company...by means of these assemblies matches are struck up¹⁴⁰

Defoe was less happy about the consequences of the meetings, although he did not believe Macky's inference that the ladies of Bury St. Edmunds behaved like whores on these occasions.¹⁴¹ However, many matches were made at assemblies, including the marriage of Sir John Vanbrugh, who looked for, and found a wife at the York Assembly in 1719.¹⁴² This marriage market may have been the cause of the Duchess of Marlborough's complaint in 1732 that at race meetings, young women spent more than they could afford in order to attract husbands.¹⁴³ The race week assemblies at York,¹⁴⁴ Wakefield,¹⁴⁵ Leeds, and Scarborough¹⁴⁶ were particularly popular. Fourteen of the eighteen places that held three day or longer meetings offered assemblies in conjunction with the races, and one, Knaresborough had an

¹³⁶Borsay Urban renaissance p 347, a two-storey assembly room adjoined the White Hart Inn

¹³⁷Borsay Urban renaissance p 336

¹³⁸Corfield p 52

¹³⁹Girouard p 132

¹⁴⁰J. Macky A journey through England (London 1732) vol. 3 p 235, quoted by Girouard p 132; Macky pt 2 p 40 quoted by Girouard p 132

¹⁴¹Defoe pp 76, 685 n 37; Girouard p 131

¹⁴²W.M. Thomas Letters and works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (London 1893) vol. 2 p 298, quoted by Girouard p 132

¹⁴³G.S.Thomson, Letters of a grandmother (London 1943) p 58

¹⁴⁴Drake p 338

¹⁴⁵Walker p 510

¹⁴⁶Baker pp 383-392; T.Friedman & D.Lindstrum, 'A tour of architectural splendour' Country Life 8 Feb 1973 pp 334-336

assembly room, but did not advertise its use in conjunction with the races. The small village of Chapel Allerton advertised assemblies at race times, but these were held in the assembly room two miles away at Leeds.¹⁴⁷ Only Barnsley and Sheffield races had short meetings associated with assemblies.

The races at the spa towns were held during the summer season when travel was easiest, and the greatest number of visitors would be present to be entertained and support the event. The races at Scarborough were run on the beach,¹⁴⁸ probably at the South Bay where low tide reveals a vast flat area of firm, dry sand, adjacent to the site of the spa itself. The Scarborough miscellany for 1732 contained a poem about the races on the sands.

Where the steep Cliffs precipitate descend,
And to the Sea their Arms incircling bend,
At frequent Periods the receding Main
Leaves on the Sands a smooth and spacious Plain...
Now gay diversions soon to Mirth invite,
And wager'd Gold the Jockey's Hopes excite:
Lo! where appearing with surpassing Grace,
Two sprightly Coursers sally to the Race,
Such as Godolphin enters at the Prize,
Bred where the'aspiring Hills of Cambridge rise.
At once they start, and measure fast the Strand,
While scarce their swifter Hoofs imprint the Sand¹⁴⁹

It was said to be a common sight every morning to see a great number of coaches and saddle-horses scouring over the sands that were as level as a bowling green.¹⁵⁰ Figure 11 shows this scene on the shore at Scarborough in 1735, with horses, sedan chairs, carriages with six horses, bathing machines and bathers on that part of the beach where the races would have been run. The seashore is public land like a common open to all, and so required no permission for races to be held. Map 2 is a modern visualisation of the town as it was in 1725 with the bathing facilities, assembly room, inns, and lodging houses all shown to be concentrated around the spa, and adjacent to the probable race site on the edge of the town, well away from the commercial harbour.¹⁵¹ Although Beverley and New Malton had small

¹⁴⁷The horses entered at Chapel Allerton races were to be shown in Leeds, LM 29 Apr 1729

¹⁴⁸YC 22 Jul 1729

¹⁴⁹Anon., The Scarborough miscellany 1732 (Scarborough 1733) pp 52-53

¹⁵⁰A.Rowntree, The history of Scarborough (London 1931) p 256

¹⁵¹Rowntree Front endpaper

spas, these were of no commercial significance and on their own did not attract visitors to the towns, but Knaresborough was a popular inland spa resort that held race meetings during the summer season. The symbiotic effect of two attractions is the reason that a small place like Knaresborough, whose population numbered less than 1,000 in 1672, was able to hold a long race meeting. In 1724, Defoe was surprised to find that Knaresborough was a:

most desolate out-of-the world place, and that men would only retire to it for religious mortifications, and to hate the world, but we found it was quite otherwise.¹⁵²

By providing amusements for visitors, this small town was able to greatly improve its fortunes. Knaresborough also provided accommodation for the patrons of the sulphur spa at nearby Harrogate, the smell from which was truly offensive.¹⁵³

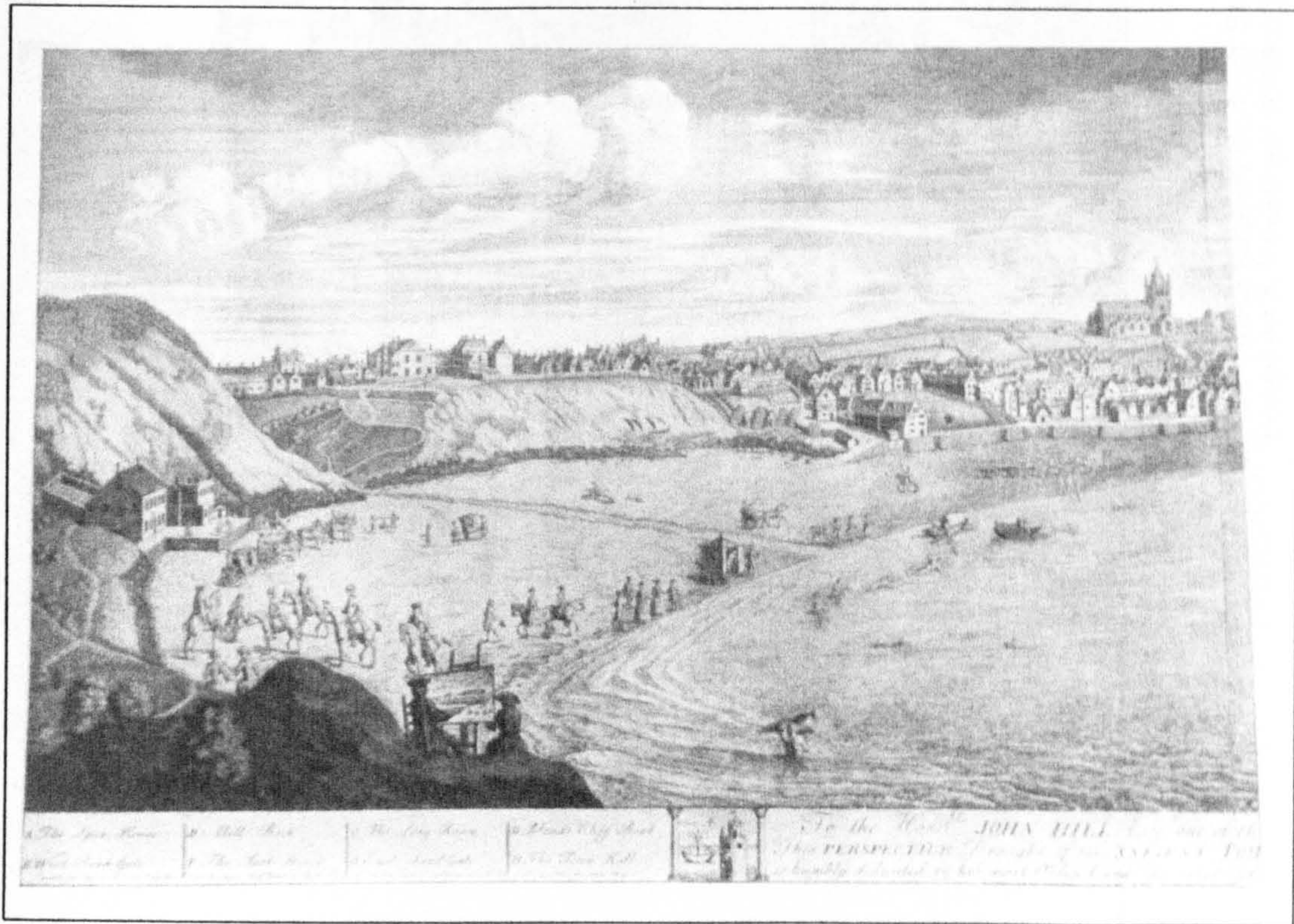
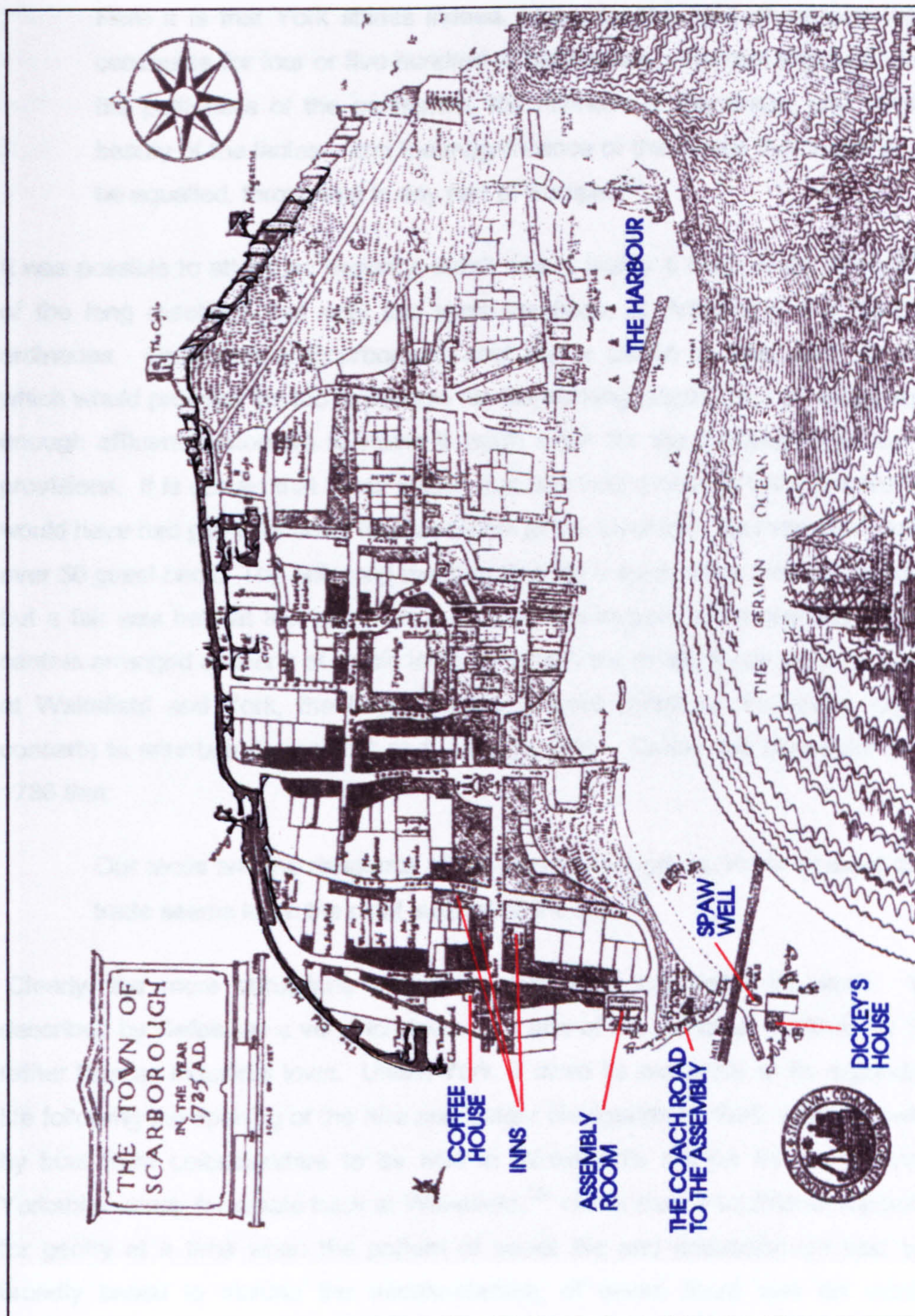


FIGURE 11

A PROSPECT OF SCARBOROUGH 1735
From A.Rowntree, The history of Scarborough

¹⁵²Defoe pp 506-507

¹⁵³Celia Fiennes wrote that the smell was so bad that she could not force her horse to go near the wells. Fiennes p 92; Hay p 186



MAP 2

THE TOWN OF SCARBOROUGH IN 1725 SHOWING LEISURE FACILITIES
based on A.Rowntree, A history of Scarborough

The grandest social events were the race-balls, and these have been found at only three places: Beverley, and York, which were recognised social centres for the gentry and New Malton, which for a time tried to become a social centre as well as a market town. Balls were held at the Scarborough assembly rooms, but not specifically for the races. Drake wrote proudly of the race balls at York.

Here it is that York shines indeed, when, by the light of several lustres, a concourse for four or five hundred of both sexes... are met together. In short, the politeness of the gentlemen, the richness of the dress, and remarkable beauty of the ladies... and the magnificence of the rooms they meet in, cannot be equalled, throughout in any part of Europe.¹⁵⁴

It was possible to attend an ordinary, which was in reality a huge feast, in conjunction with ten of the long meetings, but only two short meetings, at Arthington and Barnsley advertised ordinaries. Ordinaries at Scarborough cost twelve pence to dine, and six pence to sup,¹⁵⁵ which would probably be too expensive for the working people, and so there would need to be enough affluent customers to make it worth while for the innkeepers to lay out money on provisions. It is certain that those places that had long meetings without advertising ordinaries would have had plenty of other food available at the local inns, as they were mainly places with over 50 guest beds. The only long meeting that did not advertise ordinaries was at Middleham, but a fair was held at the same time, so food would have been plentiful. Two of the social centres arranged concerts of music to coincide with the races; these were for the long meetings at Wakefield and York, the latter, as the cultural centre of Yorkshire, regularly arranged concerts to entertain its resident and visiting gentry. Drake, the chronicler of York, wrote in 1736 that:

Our races and the residence of the gentry amongst us, in our present decay of trade seems to be the chief support of the city.¹⁵⁶

Clearly, the more attractions that York could offer the better its profit. Wakefield was described by Defoe, as a very rich town, and one of the principal markets for Yorkshire cloth, rather than an industrial town. Unlike York, it owed its prosperity to its expanding commercial life following the opening of the Aire and Calder Navigation in 1699, which allowed wool carried by boat from Leicestershire to be sold in Wakefield's market for processing elsewhere in Yorkshire, ready for resale back at Wakefield,¹⁵⁷ rather than a traditional reputation as a resort for gentry at a time when the pattern of social life and entertainment was becoming more broadly based to include the middle-classes, of whom there was an increasing number becoming rich from the Yorkshire cloth trade. 'Merry Wakefield' was replaced during the eighteenth century by Leeds as the commercial capital of the West Riding.¹⁵⁸ The races at Wakefield were well supported by the Yorkshire gentry including the local families of

¹⁵⁴Drake p 241

¹⁵⁵Friedman & Lindstrum pp 334-336

¹⁵⁶Drake p 241

¹⁵⁷Heaton pp 271-272; Defoe p 484

¹⁵⁸Corfield pp 23, 26, 51

Fitzwilliam, Vavasour, and Winn, as well as the Osbaldestons of Hunmanby, and the Duke of Perth.¹⁵⁹ A stylish grandstand, shown in Figure 12, was built before 1750, to accommodate the better-off patrons of the Wakefield races; this facility pre-dates York's first recorded grandstand built by Carr in 1754.¹⁶⁰

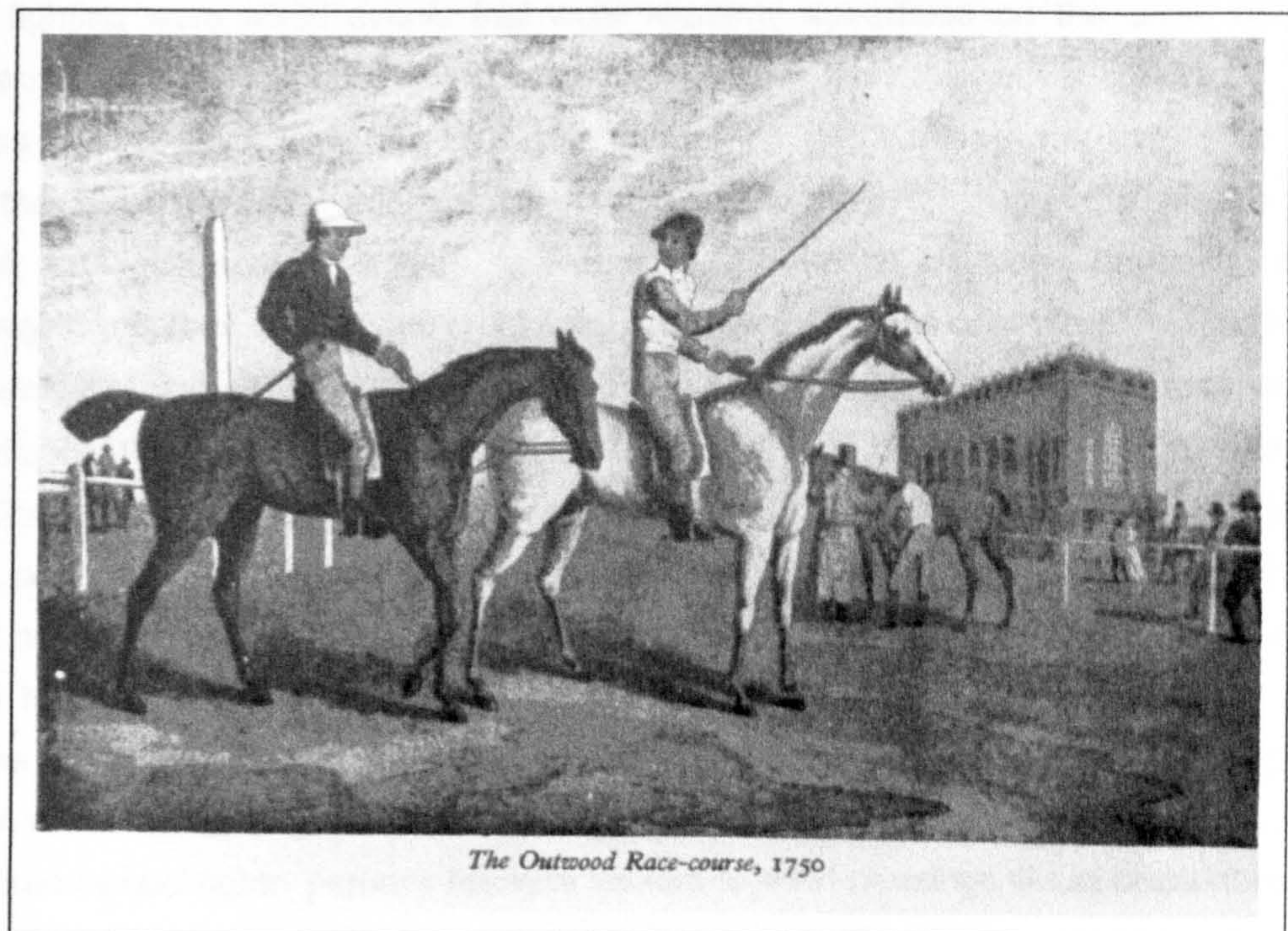


FIGURE 12

THE OUTWOOD RACECOURSE AT WAKEFIELD 1750
From J.W.Walker, *Wakefield, its history and people*

One of the reasons for the popularity of horse races to the gentry spectators was that it gave them a perfect and exciting opportunity to gamble on the winner, and as the result was usually decided by up to four heats, then the suspense continued throughout the afternoon. Those who also wanted to gamble in the mornings as well, were, in seventeen places, able to go to the cock-pits, usually attached to inns, where specially bred and trained game-cocks were encouraged to fight bloody battles, sometimes to their deaths, to win cash prizes for their owners whilst the audience crowded round and placed bets.¹⁶¹ The unfortunate birds were often the prized possessions of gentlemen who had professional 'feeders' to marshal the events

¹⁵⁹Walker vol. 2 pp 507-509

¹⁶⁰Walker vol. 2 p 509-510; Pevsner, *East Riding* p 158

¹⁶¹The first recorded race meeting that has also been found to advertise cockfighting is 1725 at Chapel Town Moor, Leeds. *LM* 27 Jul 1725

where huge sums were won and lost.¹⁶² The compleat sportsman or country gentleman's recreation, published in 1758, gave detailed instructions on the choice, training and after-fight medical attention of gamecocks which were similar to those that appeared in Cotton's The compleat gamester, the previous century.¹⁶³ A particularly brutal event was the Welsh Main, where up to 32 cocks fought in pairs to the death, until only one bird was left.¹⁶⁴ Horse races and cock fighting were allied events that were regularly advertised on the same bill, and Cheny's racing calendar included the results of cockfights with the racing results.¹⁶⁵ Both racecourses and cockpits were places where gentlemen and working men might be seen following the same pursuits, and wagering with one another.¹⁶⁶ Hogarth's picture of a Newmarket cockfight reproduced here as Figure 13, shows the classless, degrading scene where a lawyer, a barber, a peer, and a chimney sweep jostle for the best view.¹⁶⁷ Figure 14 is an enlargement of part of the picture that is said to show the involvement of racing people, where Jackson, a jockey of the day, has a cock peeping out of a sack, ready for the next contest. The shadow cast on the arena is said to be that of a gambler who was unable to pay his losses, and had been ridiculed by being made to sit in a basket fastened to the ceiling.¹⁶⁸ Ladies did not accompany the men to the cockpits. Cockfights were regularly held as a self-supporting function, but when put on in association with a race meeting then they would probably be better attended.¹⁶⁹ Fourteen of the nineteen long meetings were advertised in conjunction with cock fighting, whereas only three short meetings were advertised to be held at the same time as cockfights, perhaps because visitors to short meetings would spend less time in the place, and use the race morning to travel to the course. The cocks were often advertised as belonging to the gentlemen of areas, so that in 1730, the cocks of the gentlemen of Ripon were matched against those of Wharfedale,¹⁷⁰ but by 1746 some of the owners were named, and the birds of Francis Appleyard of Beverley, John Bartlett of Nuttle-coats, George Hassel of Ripon, and William Fox of New Malton were involved in contests for large sums of money.¹⁷¹

¹⁶²G.R. Scott, History of cockfighting (London 1957) pp 24, 112

¹⁶³T. Fairfax, The compleat sportsman or country gentleman's recreation (London 1758) pp 1-12; D. Brailsford, Sport and society p 214-215 quotes C.Cotton The compleat gamester (1674) The clipped birds can be seen clearly in Figure 14.

¹⁶⁴Malcolmson Popular recreations p 49

¹⁶⁵ Brailsford Sport and society p 215; Cheny 1730

¹⁶⁶Malcolmson Popular recreations p 50

¹⁶⁷William Hogarth, 'The cock pit', in J. Trusler, The works of William Hogarth (Tallis nd) pp 76-80

¹⁶⁸Trusler p 79

¹⁶⁹Malcolmson Sports in society pp 60-72

¹⁷⁰YC 9 Jun 1730

¹⁷¹YC 29 Apr 1746



FIGURE 13

THE COCKFIGHT BY WILLIAM HOGARTH
From J.Trusler, The works of William Hogarth



FIGURE 14

THE COCKFIGHT - DETAIL- BY WILLIAM HOGARTH
From J.Trusler The works of William Hogarth

Whilst the cockfights were taking place, usually in the mornings, and in the early evenings, the ladies and those gentlemen not involved, were able to promenade along the specially laid out walks where they displayed their fine apparel and friendships for the world, or at least the other visitors to admire. Social walking became a popular pastime for English society; on fine warm days great crowds would gather to stroll, gossip, and exchange news and develop social and sexual relationships; it was the outdoor equivalent of the assembly rooms.¹⁷² Pall Mall in London was the earliest promenade in 1660, and its popularity was noted and copied by the enterprising corporations of Epsom, Bath, and York.¹⁷³

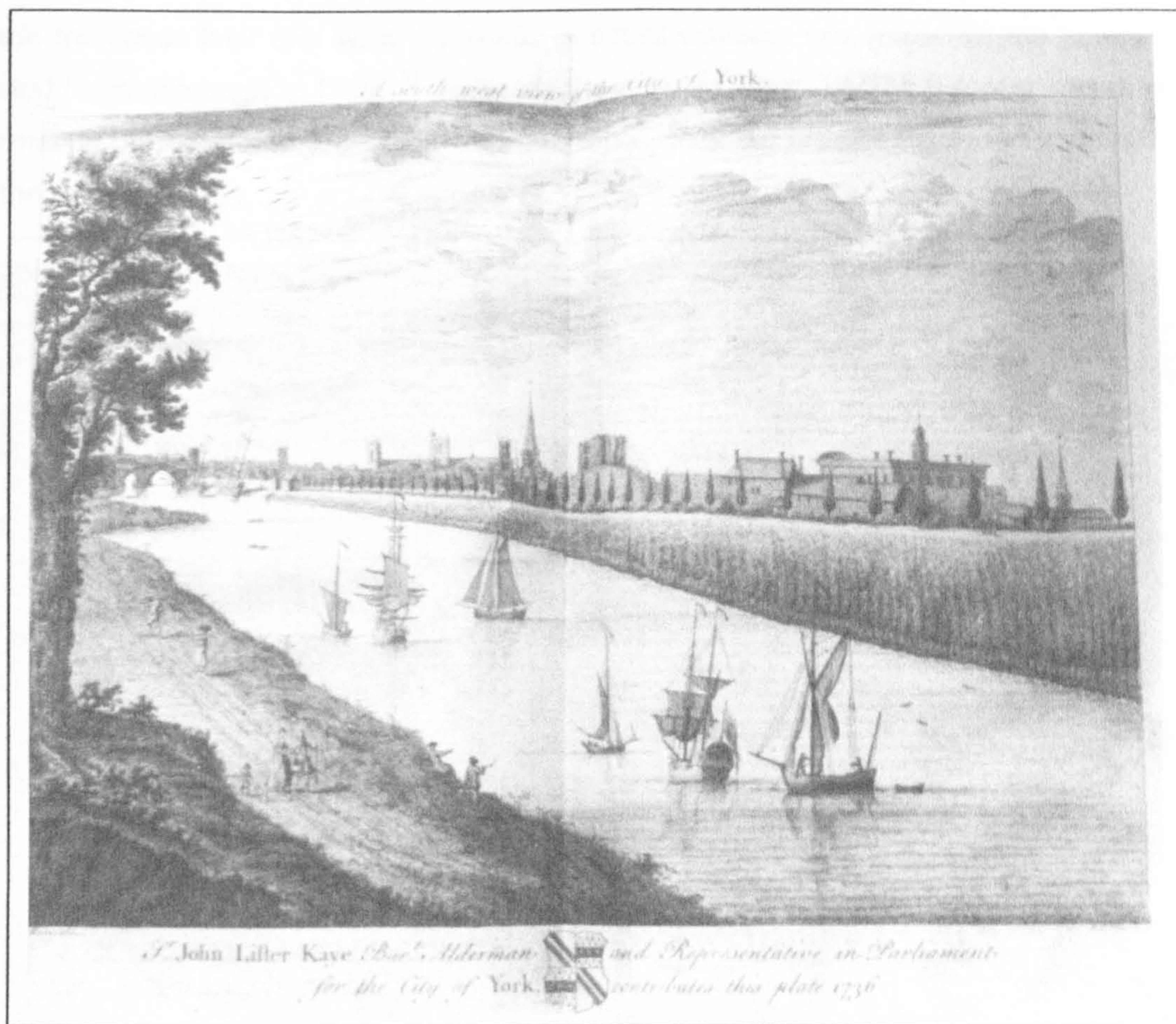


FIGURE 15

THE NEW WALK AT YORK 1736
From F.Drake Eboracum

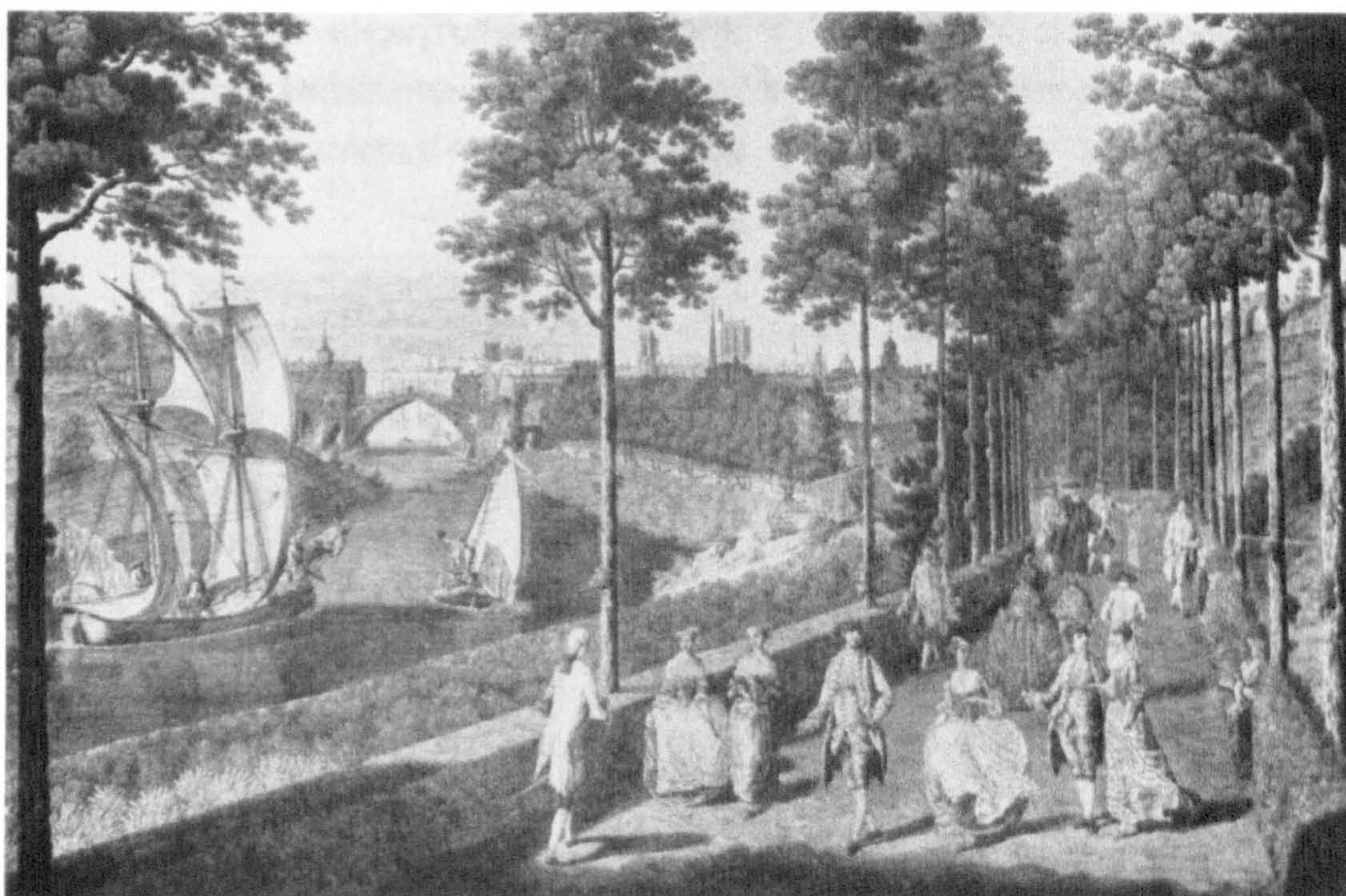
¹⁷²Girouard pp 145-146, 153

¹⁷³Girouard pp 145-151

A fine walk was laid out by the Corporation of York, along the bank of the River Ouse c.1732 at the same time that the new racecourse and assembly rooms were being constructed.¹⁷⁴ Drake included a drawing of the New Walk in his book Eboracum, and this is reproduced here as Figure 15, whilst Figure 16 shows how delightful the walk looked after it had been widened in 1739 to accommodate the crowds that were attracted to it. Visitors to the spa at Scarborough, of whom it was said

the amusements and the pleasure of seeing company induces many to come who are not really in want of water¹⁷⁵

made the sands their own walk by 1690. A social walkway was made for the company who visited Knaresborough in 1739.¹⁷⁶ Naturally these walks were used all the year round, weather permitting but like the towns' other leisure facilities, they did provide an added social attraction to the race meetings.



THE NEW WALK

FIGURE 16

THE NEW WALK AT YORK 1756

From an engraving by C.Grignon in P.M.Tillott VCH City of York

¹⁷⁴MacMahon Beverley p 56; Beverley Corporation laid out a pleasure walk in 1779

¹⁷⁵Borsay Urban renaissance p 33

¹⁷⁶E. Hargrove, The history of the castle, town and forest of Knaresborough (York 1798) p 69

People have always enjoyed the performing arts, and although the traditional mystery plays and gild pageants had been suppressed at the Reformation, some itinerant companies carried on with theatrical entertainment into the eighteenth century.¹⁷⁷ In the early eighteenth century theatre censorship may have outlawed provincial drama and made the actors into vagrants, but in reality, fashionable theatre was unaffected as the law relied solely on action by the local magistrates to prosecute the culpable, and the justices were unlikely to deprive themselves and their friends of what they perceived as harmless pleasure. There were also many ways found to evade the terms of the act.¹⁷⁸ By the 1720s, Yorkshire had regular performances of plays by Thomas Kerrigan's company that toured between Hull, Beverley, Leeds and York.¹⁷⁹ Theatrical performances were specifically timed for the race week at York, Wakefield, and Wetherby,¹⁸⁰ and although the dates of the plays at Beverley, Leeds, and Scarborough are not known, race week would have been a profitable time for any entertainment. The entertainment at Scarborough's theatre is illustrated in Figure 17, and shows the large audience in a richly appointed purpose built playhouse. The race week crowds at York had musical concerts, exhibitions of wild animals and other interesting items like clocks and clockwork dancing figures brought to the city entertain them.¹⁸¹ There was an opportunity to meet up with old school friends at the several scholars' reunions advertised to coincide with the York race week.¹⁸²

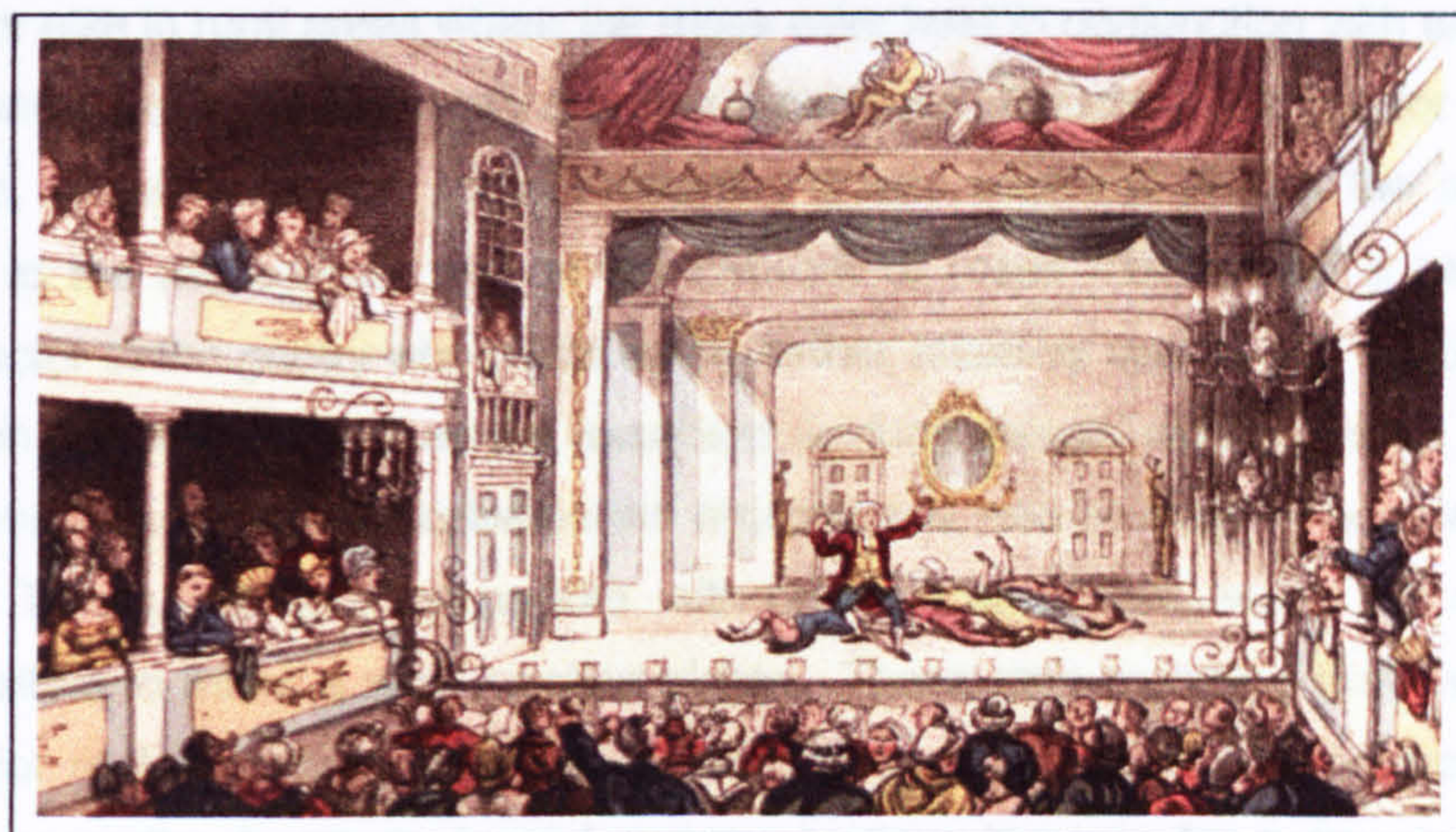


FIGURE 17

THE THEATRE AT SCARBOROUGH
From R.Ackerman.ed., Poetical sketches of Scarborough

¹⁷⁷Borsay Urban renaissance p 117

¹⁷⁸Borsay Urban renaissance pp 117-119

¹⁷⁹Tillott p 533

¹⁸⁰YC 8 May 1733; 1 Aug 1738; Unwin, p 63

¹⁸¹YC 31 Jul 1739, 27 Jun 1749

¹⁸²YC 15 Jul 1746, 25 Jul 1749

Summary

Borsay attributes the success of a race meeting to the degree of patronage that it could attract, which in turn was governed by the size, and nature of the region from which its patrons were drawn, and the infrastructure of the area. The largest and most prestigious prizes in Yorkshire during the early eighteenth century were the Royal Plates, but these were completed in one day, and if there was no other source of a prize for another day's racing then the meeting would be a short or one day meeting, as occurred for many years at Hambleton. 69.7% of Yorkshire meetings lasted for only one or two days, and only 19 out of 51 places ever managed to hold meetings of more than three days. York was the only race meeting that lasted for five days or more, and this was due to its corporation taking over and promoting the races, and encouraging the development of the city as a leisure town. A long meeting required more money for prizes than most places would be able to raise. The prizes depended upon sponsorship, either from the Crown, wealthy men, town corporations, or men in commerce who contributed towards a prize for their own advantage. A large range of leisure facilities in a race town attracted greater numbers of patrons including the rich, and so the town was able to provide more prizes and thus a longer meeting. The size of the population living within easy travelling distance of a racecourse has been found to be one of the important factors in governing the length of most Yorkshire race meetings. The long meetings were held either in, or close to, major centres of population, or else in rural areas where the races were held in conjunction with an event like an important annual fair that traditionally drew large numbers of country folk to it for a combination of economic, commercial and social reasons. It was essential to get the spectators and competitors to the racecourse, and so the network of roads that served a race site was a significant factor to the gentry who might travel further afield by coach, and needed a passable road to reach the site, as well as the local and working people who might go on foot. The competing horses were walked between the racecourses, and so ease of access to a site was paramount. Towns that were too remote, with no extra attractions, would not attract enough horses or visitors to make a race meeting viable. Those race meetings that were on or very close to major routes or bridges had an advantage in this respect. Commercial centres, or gentry towns, usually already had good communications in place for their primary functions, and had probably developed into trading centres, partly because they were situated at the junctions of routes or at river crossings, especially in Yorkshire where the land is drained towards the south east, and is divided by many deep rivers that run into the Humber Estuary. This survey found that 69% of race meetings were held in market towns, a similar figure to Borsay's national total of 70%, but races were not run on market days. Nor were race meetings allowed to disturb the business of the quarter sessions; both were held at the same places but on different dates. The larger centres of population and the smaller towns on main routes were able to provide amenities at inns in the form of accommodation and victuals that were welcomed by travellers for pleasure as well as trade. The proprietors of the inns were able to increase their trade by encouraging and sponsoring the races in return for the monopoly in

accommodating horses and spectators, and providing entertainment. Places with few inns would have less sponsors interested in promoting race meetings. Some astute town corporations recognised the potential for race meetings to promote trade for their boroughs, and certain towns set out to attract trade by utilising features that were unique and sought after, like the spas and assizes. The spas first attracted people seeking medicinal services, which may have had little effect per se, but they did give the sufferers a change of scenery, fresh air and a holiday which may have helped to improve some illnesses, but the long stays involved and the accompanying families created a demand for entertainment, and a social calendar rapidly developed at these resorts. The attendance of the northern gentry families at the York Assizes presented an ideal opportunity for social events, and the associated race meeting flourished because there were so many other concurrent leisure attractions. Eventually the recreational functions of spas and assize towns became more important commercial attractions than the medical or judicial facilities, and the leisure activities then formed the core of their industry.

CHAPTER 5

THE OWNERS AND BREEDERS OF RACEHORSES AT YORKSHIRE MEETINGS

you are come into the place noted in the north of England for ...the finest galloping horses, I mean swift horses, horses bred, as we call it for the light saddle...for the chase, for running or hunting.¹

Daniel Defoe

Introduction

This section addresses the identity of the people who owned and bred the horses that raced in Yorkshire from 1727 to 1749, which is the earliest period that detailed data is available about horses racing in Britain. This information has been provided by the publications of John Cheny, who during this period, published the earliest version of a racing calendar. It has been a major task to gather the information and to identify the owners and breeders; as well as their names, every possible detail about them was noted in order to discover as much as possible about their families, careers and lifestyles. It has been possible to identify only one quarter of the owners or breeders with reasonable certainty, but a great deal of information has been revealed about these people in relation to their racing activities, and although they are almost all from the upper levels of society, the survey will show the level of involvement of these people in horse racing. The practical aspects of racehorse-breeding do not often appear to have been recorded or preserved, but two of the breeders' studbooks that still exist will be discussed here. The fact that so many owners and breeders have not been identified despite great effort, allows us to form some ideas about them, and in particular that they were neither regular racing people nor well known in society. The anonymous group consisted mainly of people who entered for only one or two races, or bred only a few horses; almost 400 out of 729 people fall into this category, and whilst they form a large group, the fact that they then stopped racing, indicates a lack of interest, success, or money, and suggests that they had no influence on the development or promotion of horse racing.

The places where the identified owners or breeders lived, whether in Yorkshire or the rest of Britain, has been ascertained, to discover whether they supported their local race meetings or were prepared to send their horses long distances to race in addition to the factors like prize money or the presence of other owners that might have influenced their choice. The number of race meetings to which each owner sent his horses has been noted, to show the frequency that individuals wanted to, or were able to, enter for horse races and it is apparent that most people toyed with the sport, whilst only a few were able or willing to devote much time, money, or

¹ Defoe p 511

effort to racehorse ownership. This section also investigates the activities of the people who rode racehorses in the early eighteenth century, and although the great majority of them remain anonymous, some facts have come to light.

5.1 The identification of owners and breeders

Some 729 different names of people have been discovered of people who entered their horses for races in Yorkshire between 1727 and 1749. These years have been selected for this survey because they are earliest years when sufficient data is available for many courses. 1727 was the first year that the results of horse races throughout England were published in one volume by John Cheny; before this date only occasional references to race results and horse owners can be found in newspapers or private papers - certainly not enough to draw any valid conclusions. It has not been possible to obtain Cheny's volumes for every year,² and the data for the missing years has been taken from a compilation of Cheny's volumes which was printed by Weatherby in 1829.³ The results of all of the race meetings at York, together with the Royal Plate results for Black Hambleton, and some Doncaster results, were published as another compilation by a Yorkshire man, John Orton, in 1844, resulting in an almost complete set of the top rank course results and owners being available.⁴ Other data has been taken from the York Courant and Fairfax Blakeborough's Northern turf history.⁵ It seems likely that breeders had to race some horses in their own names to build up their reputation, as no breeders have been noted as breeders only.

195 people who entered their horses in Yorkshire races have been identified by their names and places of residence, and of these, 86 are known to have also bred racehorses. Although satisfactory identification has been difficult in some cases, many owners are named and their addresses or county stated in Pick's stud book,⁶ whilst advertisements for stud horses, and sales in the York Courant have provided clues. Fairfax Blakeborough also identifies several owners. Titled people have been precisely identified using Doubleday's Peerage, Burke's Landed Gentry, and Dugdale's Visitation,⁷ whilst much further information about these individuals, their families and relationships, has been found in Roebuck's work on the Yorkshire

² Cheny 1727-1749 passim

³ Some data for the years 1740- 1748 has been taken from Weatherby's compilation C.Weatherby ed. The racing calendar abridged (London 1829) vol. 1 passim

⁴ Orton passim

⁵ Fairfax Blakeborough vols. 1-4 passim

⁶ Pick vol. 1

⁷ G.E.Cockayne et al., eds., The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom 13 vols. (London 1910-1939); B.Burke, ed., A genealogical history and directory of the landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland (London 1914)

baronets.⁸ Biographical information has been found in local history books, the Dictionary of National Biography and lists of the alumni of Cambridge and Oxford Universities.⁹ The details of the political careers of those owners who were Members of Parliament have been found in Sedgwick's invaluable work, whilst some information about voters has been taken from a published poll book.¹⁰ As might be expected, the majority of identified racehorse owners who raced in Yorkshire also lived in the county, although people from all over the British Isles have been discovered. The identified owners were usually prominent men or regular racing figures who were well known to the racing fraternity.

The method of collating information on all of the owners has been to record their names for all race meetings found between 1727 and 1749 and to enter these on to a database which consists of surname and forename, address and any other information about them, additionally the names of any horses mentioned, including horses that they bred, and all of the places that they raced has been noted. This has enabled a record to be built up of the racing activities of every person named in connection with horse racing in Yorkshire. The compilers of the racing calendars rarely gave forenames, but by noting a horse's name, and checking these against Pick's stud book, where forenames and or addresses are often mentioned, it is possible to match up information e.g. a Mr. Osbaldeston is named as the owner of Traveller at York in 1739, and in Pick's stud book, it is stated that William Osbaldeston of Hunmanby bred and raced Traveller.¹¹ The compilers of the stud books used information from breeders who had certificates of the pedigrees of successful horses, or stud horses which were used to prove the blood lines and ages of horses e.g.

My horse Plunder was out of my mare Swimmer, full sister to Aldby Jenny, got by Mannica, who was got by Darley's Arabian; Plunder was got by a horse called Smiling Tom. signed Brewster.¹²

Adjustments have been made to allow for the spelling of names which was often phonetic e.g. the owner of 'Smiling Tom' has been referred to as Thomas Gallant, Galland, Gallan and Gallon.¹³ A more difficult problem is where the same horse, e.g. 'Who Can Tell', was apparently run by a Mr. Whitfield at New Malton and eight weeks later by a Mr. Whitehead at

⁸P.Roebuck, Yorkshire baronets 1640-1760 (Oxford 1980)

⁹J.Venn, ed. Alumni Cantabrigiensis pt.1 4 vols. (Cambridge 1922); J.Foster, ed. Alumni Oxoniensis 1715-1806 4 vols (London 1888)

¹⁰R. Sedgwick, The House of Commons 1715-1754 2 vols. (London 1970); Anon. The poll for a representative in Parliament for the county of York 1741 (York 1742)

¹¹Orton 1739; Pick vol. 1 p 59

¹²YC 8 Apr 1740

¹³YC 17 Mar 1730, Cheny 1728, 1730

Coolham-Dale; this case has been treated as two separate owners although they may well be the same man, but if so, it is impossible to know which is the correct name.¹⁴ A few people have been partly identified like Match'im Tims, or Matchem Timms, who was a jockey and trainer, and had a son of the same name who was also a jockey, but there is as yet no information about where he was based and so he has been placed amongst the unidentified people.¹⁵ The owners with titles have proved more readily identifiable and where a man and his successor were both owners, the known dates of death can separate them e.g. horses were entered under the name of the Duke of Ancaster from 1739-1748, but as one duke died in 1742, the activities of the two men can be differentiated. One of the most intractable problems has been caused by the eighteenth century custom of calling people by the formal Mr. which has hindered the identification of many individuals. The name Mr. Smith is found at 46 race meetings, and whilst three different addresses have been found for owners of this name, at Middleham, Easingwold, and Beverley, it has been impossible to separate the men satisfactorily. Similar problems were encountered for the Messrs. Clark (38 meetings), the Messrs. Watson (26 meetings), and the Messrs. Chapman. (13 meetings) The unidentified owners were probably men of a lesser social and financial status than the people who have been identified.

5.2 Number of race meetings attended

Table 10 shows that the great majority of the unidentified owners entered at only one race meeting in Yorkshire during the years studied. It is possible that they were people who entered for races at their local Yorkshire courses for the pleasure and excitement of competing in a horse race, or perhaps just to make up the numbers, to ensure that the race would be run. It is unlikely that they were regular racing people who chose to enter only one Yorkshire race, as the regular owners were usually well known to the racing fraternity and would probably have been identified by the compilers of the calendars or stud book. It is also possible that some of the owners' and horses' names were fictitious to disguise their form to race organisers, and gamblers, to enable the owner to cheat to win money. The regular racing people and those who owned several horses were usually known to the compilers of the stud book, but only where a forename and address are reported can positive identification be made. Unfortunately, even when the horse is found in the stud book, often no further information is available about the owner. The fact that so many owners remain unknown means that it is unwise to try to compile any general statistics about the people who raced their horse at the Yorkshire courses, but it is possible to discuss the characteristics of those owners whom it has proved possible to identify.

¹⁴ Chery 1731

¹⁵ Chery 1727 Ripon, 1731 Bedale, 1738 Hambleton

TABLE 10
NUMBER OF RACE MEETINGS ENTERED BY IDENTIFIED AND UNIDENTIFIED OWNERS
FROM VARIOUS PLACES

Number of meetings	Number of owners by county of residence		
	Yorkshire	Others	Unidentified
1	20	28	310
2	16	10	82
3	19	6	39
4	8	7	24
5	9	4	25
6	4	2	13
7	2	5	14
8	5	6	6
9	4	1	8
10	0	1	0
11	3	3	4
12-15	9	2	6*
16-25	14	0	0
26-46	7	0	3*
	total 120	total 75	total 534

* signifies one name which could be several owners

Table 10 shows that the majority of owners did not take up horse racing to any great degree. Most Yorkshire owners entered only for between one to three races, the non-Yorkshire people entered for one or two races and the great majority of those who remain unidentified i.e. 310, were, for whatever reason, once only entrants. Only a few, i.e. 30 Yorkshire owners, and two non-Yorkshire owners entered for more than twelve races. It seems likely that the majority of people entered races either for the pleasure of racing or for the experience of being an owner; people went to the races for entertainment, although the majority of them did not enter for races regularly.

5.3.1 Yorkshire owners

120 of the 729 owners are known to have lived mainly in Yorkshire, however nothing can be read into this proportion as the number of unidentified people, i.e. 534 who may or may not have been Yorkshire people, is too great for any deductions to be made. It is, however,

plausible that the unidentified owners were local farmers, or middling people, and that these classes were far more active, though less successful in racing, than the gentry. The identified Yorkshire owners included Members of Parliament, titled people, place men, courtiers, gentry, clergymen, soldiers, lawyers and physicians as well as large and small landowners and merchants - in fact anyone who wanted to, and could afford to race. A few horses were entered in women's names, but it is unlikely that any women were, during this period, serious racehorse owners. At least 62 of the Yorkshire owners also bred racehorses.

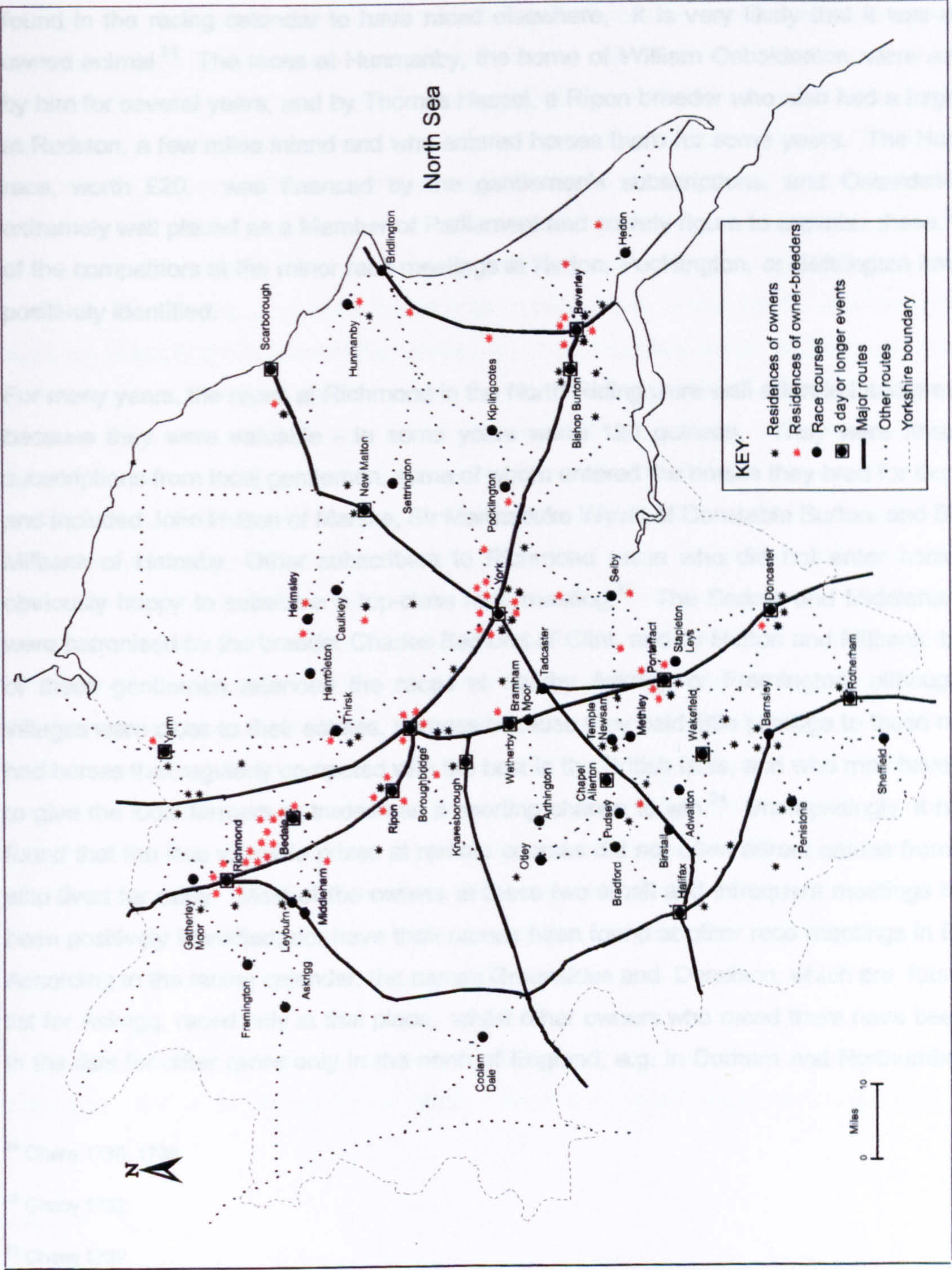
5.3.2 Support for owners' local races in Yorkshire

At this time, when most land travel was relatively difficult, it would be easiest for owners to enter their horses at race courses in the locality of their homes, or where they kept their horses. In order to see if this was the pattern that the eighteenth century owners followed, or if they sent their horses to the most fashionable or lucrative race meetings, the places that the identified owners raced have been compared with the places that they are known to have lived. Map 3 shows the distribution of the residences of the Yorkshire owners and breeders; the majority can be seen to live fairly close to the main road network. There are definite clusters of owner/ breeders in some relatively sparsely populated areas e.g. around Beverley, the Boroughbridge to Gatherley Moor district, and around York, similar areas where many racecourses existed. Few owners lived in the more densely populated West Riding. In the East Riding, the identified owners who resided near Beverley, certainly supported their local races; Thomas Galland of Cottingham, the Gees of Bishop Burton, Francis Appleyard of North Newbald, and John Brewster Darley of Aldby were regulars in the 1730s,¹⁶ and Wilberfoss Read of Pocklington, John Boyes of Driffield, and William Osbaldeston of Hunmanby by the 1740s,¹⁷ all but the Gees bred racehorses. It was usually only the East Riding owners who entered for the endowed Kiplingcotes race, which was not advertised in advance in the press, but was well very known to racing people as the result was usually reported by Cheny. The race was run very early in the season, to coincide with the York Assizes, and was an event unlikely to attract owners from outside of the county anyway. The New Malton races were amongst the most popular in the county and always attracted good local support, including John Boyes of Driffield, John Brewster Darley, Wilberfoss Read of Pocklington, and Richard Langley of Scarborough, all of whom were breeders.¹⁸

¹⁶ Cheny Beverley 1730, 1732, 1735, 1736, 1739

¹⁷ Cheny Beverley 1740, 1742, 1744

¹⁸ Cheny 1727-1750



MAP 3
RESIDENCES OF YORKSHIRE RACEHORSE
OWNERS 1727-1749

Bishop Burton was patronised by several local men including the Gees, who were the sons of the local landowner, and Hugh Bethell, a breeder who also owned large areas of land nearby.¹⁹ On the coast at Bridlington, the only local person identified was William Osbaldeston of Hunmanby.²⁰ One horse which ran there was called Bridlington Betty, and as it has not been found in the racing calendar to have raced elsewhere, it is very likely that it was a locally owned animal.²¹ The races at Hunmanby, the home of William Osbaldeston, were supported by him for several years, and by Thomas Hassel, a Ripon breeder who also had a large house at Rudston, a few miles inland and who entered horses there for some years. The Hunmanby race, worth £20, was financed by the gentlemen's subscriptions, and Osbaldeston was extremely well placed as a Member of Parliament and society figure to organise these.²² None of the competitors at the minor race meetings at Hedon, Pocklington, or Settrington have been positively identified.

For many years, the races at Richmond in the North Riding were well attended and prestigious, because they were valuable - in some years worth 120 guineas. They were financed by subscriptions from local gentlemen, some of whom entered the horses they bred for the events, and included John Hutton of Marske, Sir Marmaduke Wyvill of Constable Burton, and Sir Ralph Milbank of Halnaby. Other subscribers to Richmond races who did not enter horses were obviously happy to subsidise a top-class race meeting.²³ The Bedale and Middleham races were patronised by the breeder Charles Bathurst of Clint, and by Hutton and Milbank, but none of these gentlemen attended the races at nearby Askrigg or Fremington, although these villages were close to their estates, perhaps because they held little prestige to these men who had horses that regularly competed with the best in the British Isles, and who may have wanted to give the local farmers or tradesmen a sporting chance to win.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, it has been found that the less valuable prizes at remote courses did not often attract entries from owners who lived far away. Most of the owners at these two small and infrequent meetings have not been positively identified, nor have their names been found at other race meetings in England. According to the racing calendar, the names Greensides and Dennison, which are found in the list for Askrigg, raced only at that place, whilst other owners who raced there have been found in the lists for other races only in the north of England, e.g. in Durham and Northumberland.²⁵

¹⁹ Cheny 1738, 1739

²⁰ Cheny 1732

²¹ Cheny 1732

²² Cheny 1730, 1732, 1735, 1737; Sedgwick vol. 2 p 314

²³ Prior Early records p 64

²⁴ Cheny Bedale 1727, 1728, Middleham 1729, Bedale 1732

²⁵ Cheny Askrigg 1738, 1739, Fremington 1732, 1739

Similarly, in the lists for Fremington, Messrs. Ormsby and Salkeld have not been found to have raced at other places or bred horses, although Tims and Redshaw raced at other courses in North Yorkshire. It is interesting to note that a Mr. Wass had only one horse, a galloway called Yorkshire Molly, which he took round thirteen northern courses including the smaller ones at Askrigg and Fremington during 1737-1739.²⁶ The remote courses with very poor road communications did not attract high profile horses or owners, even the ones who lived within ten miles did not usually race there,²⁷ although the Duke of Bolton entered a horse for the June races at one meeting at Leyburn, close to his home at Castle Bolton.²⁸ The races at Askrigg were run in October, and in April at Fremington i.e. at the beginning and the end of the racing season, which unfortunately coincided with the times of the high profile Newmarket meetings where the most valuable races were run, both as open competitions and private matches, and it is certain that the top rank owners preferred to race there. Race prizes at Newmarket were regularly between £100 and £1,000, whilst some matches were made for £300 and some very serious betting took place there amongst the owners and spectators. Many racing men were heavy gamblers, and as this was a major attraction of the sport, they went with their racehorses to popular race meetings where they could be certain of meeting other wealthy gamblers, which meant Newmarket in April and October. Yarm races, usually held in September, were attended by some very well known North Riding breeders: Sir Marmaduke Wyvill, Sir Ralph Milbank and John Hutton, as well as breeders from the neighbouring county of Durham on the opposite bank of the river Tees, including William Carr of Auckland, and Ralph Jenison of Walworth.²⁹ Scarborough races were part of the social season for the wealthy visitors to that fashionable spa town, but although many racehorse owners spent time there, few of them have been found to have entered their horses. In 1727, only John Boyes, a Driffild farmer and horse breeder, and the breeder Henry Peirse of Bedale Hall appeared on the list of owners, and in the following two years, just two East Riding owners - Thomas Gallant, a breeder and farmer of Cottingham, and William Metcalfe, a townsman of Beverley - have been identified. Only Peirse, the MP for Northallerton, could be classed as particularly wealthy or as a society figure.³⁰

The West Riding was the most densely populated and commercially orientated part of Yorkshire, and this allowed for a greater degree of small business sponsorship of race

²⁶Wass is unidentified

²⁷John Hutton lived at Marske only seven miles from Fremington, and the Duke of Bolton's Bolton Castle is nine miles from Askrigg.

²⁸Cheney 1731

²⁹Cheney 1727, 1730, 1738

³⁰ Park p 146

meetings, which in turn meant that many races there were organised by people other than the gentlemen who entered their horses. This may have resulted in a feeling amongst the gentry that there was less pressure from friends and acquaintances to support the events and so there may have been a little less interest from this quarter. No results of the races have been found from eight of the West Riding courses i.e. Adwalton, Arthington, Birstall, Bradford, Methley, Penistone, Pudsey, and Wetherby, resulting in no information about what sort of people entered horses there. The available results from some of the other courses show variable amounts of local support. Local contestants at Pontefract races occasionally included John Stanhope of Horsforth, whose family had land in the area, and breeders Thomas Vavasour of Haselwood, and Thomas Bright of Badsworth.³¹ The Doncaster races were entered by Sir George Cook of Wheatley, John Childers of Doncaster, as well as Vavasour, and Bright.³² The only identified owner at the Barnsley races was Sir John Kaye of Denby.³³ Sir Reginald Graham of Norton Conyers made one of his two known ventures into horse racing at his local course at Boroughbridge, where Sir John Stapylton of Myton, and John Bouchier a breeder of Beningbrough also sent horses.³⁴ Only Thomas Hassel of Ripon was identified at Bramham.³⁵ There were several courses in the Leeds area that were patronised by the local gentry, although none of them bred racehorses, these included Cyril Arthington of Harewood, Sir Thomas Gascoigne of Bambow, and Henry Ibbetson of Denton, whose family's money was derived from the Leeds cloth trade.³⁶ Ripon was another meeting connected with the Milbank and Hutton horses, whilst the Halifax races were supported by two Barnsley gentlemen, Sir Samuel Armitage and Michael Ann.³⁷ Sir John Kaye and Sir Samuel Armitage also entered horses in the races at Wakefield.³⁸ The one day events at Selby were entered by Wilberfoss Read of Pocklington, and Mr Palmes of Naburn.³⁹ The five race courses at Knaresborough, Otley, Rotherham, Sheffield and Tadcaster had no identified local support.

The popular York and Black Hambleton race meetings were always the high point of the northern racing year, to which owners from all parts of England, as well as the York area, sent their horses, and these included several of the most enthusiastic and successful racing people

³¹ Cheny 1727, 1730, 1738

³² Orton 1730, 1735, 1739, 1746

³³ Cheny 1738

³⁴ Cheny 1731, 1732

³⁵ Cheny 1737

³⁶ Cheny Leeds 1732, Chappel Town 1727, Roebuck p 58, 310

³⁷ Cheny Ripon 1727, Halifax 1738, 1739

³⁸ Cheny 1730, 1739

³⁹ Cheny 1731, 1739

in Britain. The local owners included the Earl of Carlisle, John Brewster Darley of Aldby, George Witty of York, Sir James Pennyman of Ormesby and Beverley, and Lewis Elstob of Wigganthorpe.⁴⁰ All but Pennyman had bred racehorses. The race meetings at York and neighbouring Black Hambleton, always held within a day of each other, had great prestige, partly due to the Royal Plate races regularly held at both places, as well as the fact that the races were arranged to extend the northern social season that accompanied the York Assizes, and so the meetings attracted owners from all over Britain who could combine their sport with the concurrent entertainments. The considerable support that the York races received, helped to create money for the valuable prizes which further increased the status of the meeting.

5.4 Non-Yorkshire owners

Map 4 shows the counties where the 75 identified owners, including 24 owner/ breeders lived outside of Yorkshire, as well as the 120 Yorkshire people. It can be seen that the identified owners from outside of Yorkshire were outnumbered by the Yorkshire owners. The distances that horses had to walk to the races obviously played a great part in deciding which meetings to send horses to, although the more prestigious races could be worth the journey. Many owners will not have contemplated racing at the in lesser Yorkshire courses in case their valuable horses were injured on the journey, and many racing days would be wasted on the long journeys over the rough poor roads, which could take weeks. York and Black Hambleton were sufficiently attractive fixtures to induce people to send their horses long distances to race. Some of the most famous and enthusiastic racing men of the day like Viscount Lonsdale, the Earls of Godolphin, Portmore, and Gower and the Duke of Ancaster regularly raced there.⁴¹ The non resident racing people did not only enter at the prestigious meetings at York or Black Hambleton, the owners who lived in the neighbouring counties sent horses to some less important Yorkshire races, notably those within fairly easy reach of their homes e.g. Sir Robert Eden of Durham raced at Gatherley Moor, Lord Byron and Mundy Musters of Nottinghamshire entered horses at Doncaster, whilst Sir Ralph Asshton and Dr. Bracken of Lancashire entered at Knaresborough.⁴² Two neighbouring counties had the greatest number of owners who entered at the Yorkshire courses i.e. Lincolnshire and Durham, with thirteen and eight owners respectively, whilst very few owners from the most distant counties sent horses to Yorkshire.

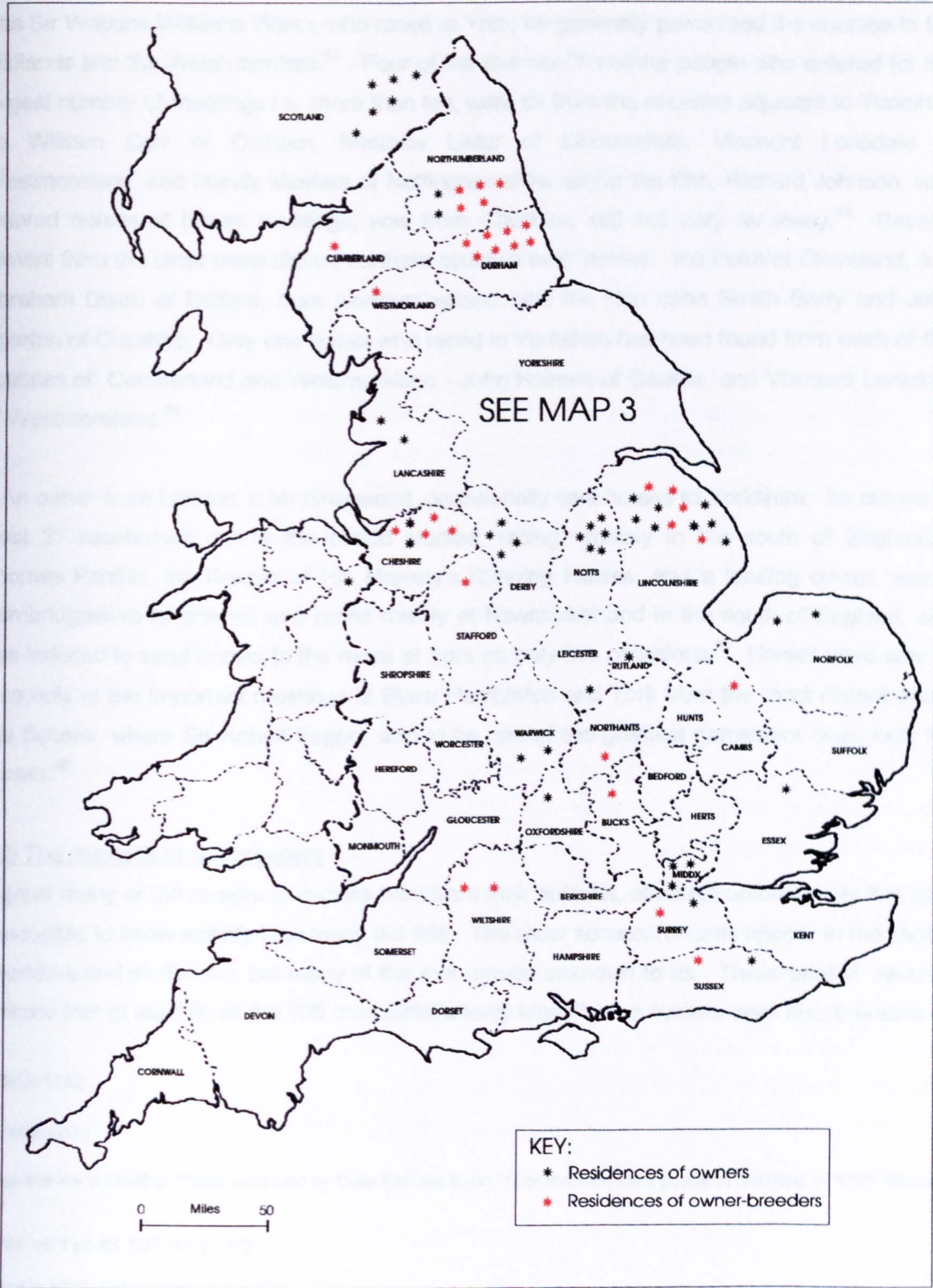
The distance that the horses travelled to courses was a major factor for the owners in determining which race meetings to attend. No information has been found about the places that many owners kept their racehorses, or had them trained during the early eighteenth century. Neither has evidence has been found to suggest that horses were sent to specialised

⁴⁰ Orton 1717, 1719, 1721

⁴¹ Orton 1727, 1739, 1740

⁴² Cheny Gatherley Moor 1739, Doncaster 1745, Knareborough 1732, 1735

training establishments as they are today, and so it is likely that racehorses were usually kept on their owners' estates. Six Scottish owners including the Dukes of Hamilton, and Perth, and Lord Crawford sent horses to race in Yorkshire.



MAP 4

RESIDENCES OF RACEHORSE OWNERS
WHO RACED IN YORKSHIRE 1727-1749

The racing calendars show that many Scots raced only in the north of England, as the distance that their horses would have walked to southern meetings was probably unacceptable to them in terms of time and risk of injury. Only the Duke of Hamilton occasionally entered horses at Newmarket. The one Welsh owner who has been found to have raced a horse in Yorkshire was Sir Watkins Williams Wynn, who raced at York; he generally patronised the courses in the Midlands and the Welsh borders.⁴³ Four of the five non-Yorkshire people who entered for the largest number of meetings i.e. more than ten, were all from the counties adjacent to Yorkshire i.e. William Carr of Durham, Matthew Lister of Lincolnshire, Viscount Lonsdale of Westmoreland, and Mundy Musters of Nottinghamshire, whilst the fifth, Richard Johnson, who entered horses at fifteen meetings, was from Cheshire, still not very far away.⁴⁴ Several owners from the other more distant northern counties sent horses - the Duke of Cleveland, and Abraham Dixon of Belford, from Northumberland, and the Hon John Smith Barry and John Egerton of Cheshire. Only one owner who raced in Yorkshire has been found from each of the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland - John Holmes of Carlisle, and Viscount Lonsdale of Westmoreland.⁴⁵

An owner from London, a Mr Grisewood, occasionally sent horses to Yorkshire; he owned at least 27 racehorses during the period studied, racing mainly in the south of England.⁴⁶ Thomas Panton, the Keeper of His Majesty's Running Horses, and a leading owner, was a Cambridgeshire landowner who raced mainly at Newmarket and in the south of England, and was induced to send horses to the races at York on only two occasions.⁴⁷ Horses were sent to race only at the important meetings at Black Hambleton and York from the most distant areas like Sussex, where Sir Robert Fagge, said to be one of the greatest gamesters ever, kept his horses.⁴⁸

5.5 The methods of two breeders

A great many of the racehorse owners bred from their animals, although unfortunately it is now impossible to know exactly how many did this. The most successful ones appear in the racing calendars and studbooks, but many of the rest remain unknown to us. These printed records indicate that at least 86 of the 195 men satisfactorily identified as owners were also breeders of

⁴³ Orton 1743

⁴⁴ Pick passim

⁴⁵ The stables at Lowther Castle were said by Celia Fiennes to be 'finer than the royal palace in Scotland' in 1705. Morris p 170

⁴⁶ Pick vol 1 pp 43, 157, 207-8, 472

⁴⁷ Cheny 1737, 1743; Venn vol. 3 p 303

⁴⁸ Fagge married, in 1729, the daughter of another racing man Dr. William Ward of York, perhaps this was a reason for him being at York. Sedgwick vol. 2 p 22

racehorses. A few records exist that show the way that some eighteenth century racehorse breeders went about their business, although the published records suggest that they wrote down just enough to remind themselves of the pedigrees of the animals involved, their origins, and eventual ownership, together with notes of the sums of money that changed hands. Three early stud books were published by C.M.Prior in Early records of the thoroughbred horse,⁴⁹ and the activities of two of these breeders form part of this thesis, i.e. the Duke of Ancaster and Cuthbert Routh.⁵⁰

Routh had his stables in Yorkshire, whereas the Ancaster horses were kept at Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire. The records of the two studs are similar, although Routh appears to have been more involved in the practical aspect of breeding and training than the duke, who retained a servant to oversee the day-to-day activities of his horses. Both sets of records are greatly concerned with pedigrees, because the value of an untried horse, or a brood mare, to a prospective buyer was heavily dependent upon the performance of its close relatives, thus it was essential for breeders to maintain the pedigree records of their animals, and these, often supplied by other breeders, are preserved in both sets of records with the breeders' own additions and descriptions of the horses. The author of a handbook for horsemen stated categorically that: 'If you do not breed, do not buy, except good blood.'⁵¹ Routh's records contain notes of horse values and cash paid or received for horses, whereas the trainer at Grimsthorpe, who was a servant, made no mention of money; this aspect was no doubt dealt with by the duke and his steward.

Routh was a commoner, but a gentleman, with wealthy and titled connections; his income was derived from a small estate and the tolls from the locks and dams he owned on the River Tees.⁵² His stud book records, said to be in his own handwriting, show that he probably covered his costs and made a small profit of £6, 637. 10. 0 in the 30 years that he kept his stud. The extent of his expenses is however, unclear, although it may be that the hay, oats, and grazing costs were absorbed by his estate farm,⁵³ and on the credit side he collected race prize money that he did not list. Unfortunately, there is no information about his gambling activities, and this is the area where many fortunes were made or lost, often the latter, although Routh carried out careful trials timed to the second on his own racehorses, noting conditions and jockey weights, probably giving him a better idea than most punters about what to expect in a race. Routh occasionally entered a horse in the name of one of his daughters,

⁴⁹Prior Early records

⁵⁰The Duke of Newcastle is the other owner but his studbook is outside of the dates of this study

⁵¹Wallis np section Racehorses

⁵²BIHR York, Probate Register 96/196, will of Cuthbert Routh

⁵³Prior Early records p 35

and this is discussed in section 6.1. The Routh horses usually raced at courses in the north of England.

The Duke of Ancaster was a very wealthy courtier whose family were also keen horse-racing people, and his horses raced regularly all over England. The Ancaster studbook was kept by Ward, the duke's trainer, from his appointment in 1722 until his death in 1737, when the records at Grimsthorpe end.⁵⁴ The method of carefully noting pedigrees and foalings is similar to Routh's, but the duke was a very rich man, and the records show that, unlike Routh, he kept his own valuable, high quality stallions for breeding. There are no accounts or details of purchases or sales in the Ancaster book; financial matters were undoubtedly not the concern of the trainer. The Ancaster stud appears to have kept around six to ten brood mares and up to four stallions at any one time, the latter may have been made available to other selected breeders. The best of the three to six foals born annually were reared for racing or breeding; no mention is made of the rest which were probably sold off. All of the duke's racehorses, many of which were bred at Grimsthorpe, were trained in the deer park there, where trials were held, and jockey weights noted ready to be reported to the duke. These trials however were not timed, only the order and distances in which the horses finished were recorded.⁵⁵ The speed which racehorses could achieve was then, as today, all important, and this suggests that the technique of early racing, which was described by Fairfax Blakeborough is not confirmed by Routh's records, nor by a mid-eighteenth century manual of horsemanship.⁵⁶ Fairfax Blakeborough stated that jockeys rode waiting races, going at a slow pace until the end was in sight then made a dash for the winning post, but the times that Routh measured show that the horses must have gone almost flat-out for the whole distance. Routh timed both trials and races over three and four miles and his records show that average speeds of around 28 to 30 mph were achieved.⁵⁷ The manual describes several tactics with regard to making the best use of the wind direction and ground conditions, as well as how to un-nerve the opponent's horse, but the author clearly states: 'ride each heat throughout with the best speed you can.'⁵⁸ Even allowing for Routh's less accurate methods of timing, the speeds run by racehorses two hundred years later are rather similar, and modern horses do not have to run the same distance

⁵⁴Prior Early records pp 75-76

⁵⁵Prior Early records pp 75-96

⁵⁶Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 3 p 57; Wallis np section Matches

⁵⁷Prior Early records p 66

⁵⁸Wallis, np section Matches

up to three times in one afternoon, nor withstand the cruel training methods that the eighteenth century horses did.⁵⁹

Cuthbert Routh was in his early twenties when his records commenced in 1718; by then he was already dealing in high quality stock from his base at Moulton near Richmond. In 1728 he moved part of the stud to Dinsdale where he had an estate on the Durham side of the River Tees, and in 1740 he transferred to Snape Hall near Bedale, Yorkshire, although he may still have resided partly at Dinsdale.⁶⁰ The breeders of the Bedale area are credited by Prior with producing 73 of the 78 mares named in the General Stud-Book as the origins of all modern racehorses.⁶¹ Little is actually known about Routh's background, but he married into the wealthy Milbanke family of Halnaby, who had highly lucrative investments in coal and land, and were important supporters of horse racing. Routh bred racehorses, reared the foals and sold them off or raced them himself; he also purchased a few horses which he raced. The brood mares in his stud were sent away to be covered by top class stud horses like Mr. Panton's Crab, at Newmarket, and Lord Portmore's Fox.⁶² This breeding method allowed Routh to improve and also vary his blood lines cheaply and regularly. There were three or four brood mares in the Routh stud at any one time from which two to four foals per year were born, and these were usually sold on, some as yearlings for very little, or for as much as 100 guineas, whilst some older horses could command greater sums.⁶³ Routh's horses ran regularly at meetings in the north of England where he met, and sold horses to, some of the richest and most prominent racegoers of the day. These included Thomas Panton who bought Routh's horse Stadtholder for 350 guineas after it won at York in 1747, whilst Lord Portmore purchased Routh's Jenny-Come-Tye-Me, the winner of the Royal Plate at Hambleton, for 250 guineas in 1734.⁶⁴ When the opportunity arose, Routh made a good quick profit by buying, racing and then selling a horse in one year. Sellers could show confidence in a horse, as well as profit in future winnings, by accepting a slightly lower price for a horse, with the provision in the contract that an extra sum would be paid when the horse won a substantial prize, and Routh's records show that this was a method that he regularly used.

⁵⁹ Many horses were cruelly castrated, or were purged and dosed regularly with lethal concoctions called remedies. Wallis sections on gelding, purging; H. Bracken Farriery improved or a compleat treatise upon the art of farriery (London 1737 5th edition 1741) pp 32, 33, 79, 81, 281

⁶⁰Routh's coach geldings were kept at Dinsdale. Prior Early records p 51

⁶¹Prior Early records pp 5-6

⁶²Prior Early records pp 48,58

⁶³Prior Early records p 31

⁶⁴Prior Early records pp 33, 34

I gave Mr Hutton a Hundrd gs for this horse and sold him the same year after winning the Stakes at Richmond and Gold Cup at York to Mr Herbt 10th Decr 1725, for two hundrd and fifty guineas, & fifty more the first £100 he won.⁶⁵

Sales between breeders might allow for the free services of a stallion, and even for a delayed payment,

Sold a Black colt calld Orinooko to Ralph Hawxwell of Cathrick [Catterick] for 30gs to be pd at 3 times and to have a leap yearly.⁶⁶

Routh used this stallion several times, and one of its progeny also called Orinooko, later raced for him. There was obviously a good and trusting relationship between many of the northern breeders who sometimes became partners in the ownership and breeding of horses. Routh was a joint owner of brood mares with Lord Portmore, Ralph Jennison, and William Carr, as well as his brother-in-law Captain Milbanke, and he owned a colt with Thomas Jackson who is said to have been his trainer.⁶⁷ Although Routh did not normally provide livery services for other people's horses, he was paid for the keep of some horses of the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Portmore between 1740-1741.⁶⁸ Routh usually kept from three to seven racehorses in training at any one time as well as the young horses that he watched and raised as potential winners or brood mares. By 1751, the year before he died, he estimated that his stud was worth £1,200⁶⁹ which at this time was a reasonable return on his investment.

The duties of the men who are referred to as trainers or training grooms by modern racing historians, are difficult to define at this distance in time, but it is unlikely that the early eighteenth century trainers had their own yards or were independent agents. No records are available to show the activities of the small-scale owners who may have ridden their own horses in training and at the races, but the wealthy owners of strings of racehorses employed men and boys to exercise their animals as well as ride in races. Two months was said to be the minimum time required to prepare a horse for a race, during which time its exercise and feeding regimes were meticulously ordered.⁷⁰ The records left by Routh do not show what duties were carried out by Thomas Jackson, the man usually said to have been his trainer, or

⁶⁵Prior Early records p 31

⁶⁶Prior Early records p 33

⁶⁷Prior Early records pp 31, 43, 52, 62

⁶⁸Prior Early records pp 60-63. The stallion owner sometimes kept valuable mares that had been put in foal until the foal was delivered so that a pregnant mare did not have to travel and miscarry.

⁶⁹Prior Early records p 54

⁷⁰Each trainer will have had his own schedule but one is recommended in Wallis section Matches

whether Jackson did much more than exercise the horses.⁷¹ The two men certainly had a long standing alliance, and Jackson was one of the three jockeys whom Routh is known to have employed, but Jackson also rode for many other owners.⁷² Routh kept records of the timed trials of his horses that he carried out, apparently in secrecy at 4am in April; he also studied the times, distances, ground conditions, and weight carried in races. He noted that later heats were always run in slower times than first heats and so it was obvious to him that in races run in heats, it might be foolish to run a horse flat out in a first heat, needing only a good result, whilst letting the others fight for the first place, and then win the next two heats because the others were tired. Routh noted the times that certain races were won in; these times were not in the newspapers or racing calendars, and he probably timed them for himself to compare with the times that his own horses ran in training so that he was able to assess their chances. Some of his horses trained on a course on Watlass Moor, less than a mile north of Snape, whilst others were sent in the care of Thomas Jackson to Hambledon Moor, from where Jackson reported their progress back to Routh by letter.⁷³ Horse racing was a family activity for the Rouths; Judith, his wife, was from a racing family, and Routh occasionally raced his horses in the names of three of his daughters, one of whom married a prominent racing man, George Baker of Durham.⁷⁴ After his death in 1752, his wife allowed two of his horses to race before selling the stud.⁷⁵

5.6 Gentleman riders

Information about the races that took place in the first part of the eighteenth century is very sparse indeed, but what there is shows that some gentlemen enjoyed competitive riding. Valuable races at Bramham and Doncaster in 1700-1701 were worth £40 and £20 respectively, and were advertised to be specifically for gentleman riders weighing 12 stones, and in 1702 the Royal Plate for £100 at Bramham was also for gentlemen. However, after 1707, grooms were also allowed to ride, and later there was no qualification placed on the rank of the riders.⁷⁶ No other races for gentlemen have been found until the York race organisers put on races for hunters to be ridden by gentlemen weighing 10 to 12 stones, from 1725 to 1739; these events always took place on the last Saturday of the meeting and finished the festivities off on a high

⁷¹Prior Early records p 21

⁷²Prior wrote, 'No jockey's names were recorded in the racing calendar till 1823, then only the winning jockey, the others not being given till 1845' Calendar p 65. Jockey's names were not usually recorded in the early eighteenth century although Orton or the York Courant occasionally reports them.

⁷³Prior Calendar pp 65-66. In Yorkshire the term moor is often used for any uncultivated land as well as for heather clad hillsides

⁷⁴Cheny Doncaster, 1736, 1742, 1743, York 1744; BIHR wills register 96/196 George Baker

⁷⁵Prior Calendar p 55; Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 2 p 276 has speculated that Routh's death may have resulted in the demise of racing at Yarm, near to his stud, but Routh has not been found to have ever raced there.

⁷⁶LG 28 Mar, 10 Jun 1700, 9 Jun 1701, 10 Aug 1702, 19 Jul 1703, 21 Feb 1704, 26 Jun 1707

note for the younger society visitors who might then stay on over the weekend to see friends competing for the 20-25 guineas prize, and thus spend more time and money in York.⁷⁷ The village race meetings did not appear to hold gentlemen's races, but these events were often hard pressed to raise any prize money. The Parliamentary legislation of 1739 which forced race organisers to pay a minimum of £50 prize money would have ended the gentlemen's races at York when a shortage of sponsorship money reduced the meeting to four days. By 1747, a new £50 prize for gentlemen riders was run, and in 1748 it was to be for owner riders only, but later the race was discontinued. These riders were not always named in the racing calendars, but those names which have been found, are, as might be expected, those often associated with horse racing e.g. Lord March, Mr Duncombe and Mr Hartley.⁷⁸

5.7 Professional trainers and jockeys

There is scant information about the people who earned their living by training or riding horses, perhaps because they were classed as servants, and thus regarded as being of little importance. Documentary evidence of racing, printed in the newspapers and racing calendars, was almost always for the benefit of the middle and upper classes, and it is likely that they were more interested in the ownership and breeding of the horses than the names of the riders; indeed even the horses' names were not stated in some cases, and some horses were deliberately not named and might be referred to, for example, as Mr Soandso's black mare. Orton named the riders occasionally, and a few newspaper references, particularly in advance of races, have been found, but the latter were not to give any credit to the riders, merely to inform the prospective punters of the colours that they would be wearing in the race. These early racing professionals appear to have kept no records of their own. Fairfax Blakeborough names John Singleton as the first professional jockey in 1732, but he is unlikely to be the earliest as there are many examples of riders named before this, and when so much money depended on the outcome of races, the owners would have wanted a trustworthy and capable man to ride, not an amateur, although a few races were especially for gentleman riders.⁷⁹ One race was organised by a gentlewoman, for women riders.⁸⁰

Only 66 names of jockeys who rode in Yorkshire have been found in the racing calendars, newspapers and stud books published between 1700 and 1751, when there must have been hundreds of men and boys so employed. Occupations are difficult to discover from the eighteenth century, but are very occasionally to be found in ecclesiastical records; eight

⁷⁷Orton 1725-1739

⁷⁸Orton 1747, 1748

⁷⁹Fairfax Blakeborough vol. 1 p 50

⁸⁰ W.Harrison, ed., Ripon millenary (Ripon 1892) pp 93-94 quoting the Newcastle Courant of 28 Aug 1725 when Mrs. Aislabie of Studley Royal gave 15 guineas for a race on 14 Sep 1725 for women riders over three heats, twice round the Common for a heat, at Ripon

jockeys or horse coursers were recorded in the parish registers of Sheffield, and one each in the registers of York and Wensley, but none have been found elsewhere in racing records.⁸¹ Most of the jockeys whose names have been found have only been found once, although they probably rode regularly, but unfortunately their names have gone unrecorded. A few race results from York published by Orton, mention jockey's names, particularly those from the late 1730s, so these jockeys are the only ones that can be investigated. 62 men were named as jockeys for between one and four races each, and only four jockeys were credited with more than ten races each. All of these men appear to have ridden for many different owners, and all of the owners appeared to have used the services of several jockeys so that it appears unlikely that any jockey was the servant of one particular owner, and it is probable that they worked on a similar basis to most present day jockeys, and were self employed, riding for a fee and a winning bonus. These four most employed jockeys were also involved in training either their own or other peoples' horses. Thomas Jackson who was named 22 times from 1727-1749, worked for Routh, training or exercising his horses, and he also rode in races for Routh as well as for fourteen other owners until he was 60 years of age. Jackson was part owner of one valuable horse with Cuthbert Routh; when they sold the horse to Lord Portmore, Jackson rode him and won at York for two consecutive years before becoming a trainer at Newmarket.⁸² John Singleton was named as jockey twelve times and is said to have been part owner of a successful racehorse with Wilberforce Read before becoming a trainer to Lord Rockingham at Newmarket.⁸³ The other two prominent Yorkshire riders, Stephen Jefferson and Match'em Tims each owned racehorses in their own right, which as professionals they would have trained themselves. Jefferson entered the minor events at Bedale and Yarm from 1727-1731, and Tims appears to have owned at least ten horses from 1725-1739, one of which was very successful and won the Royal Plates at Richmond, and Newcastle, as well as other races including Kiplingcotes; unfortunately there is no information as to whether he rode in these races himself, although he rode many times for prominent owners, and was sent by Routh to purchase a horse for him in 1729. His son, also nicknamed Match'em, began riding professionally aged eleven and a half, when he won his first race in a match over Hambledon in 1738.⁸⁴

Jefferson was the first person found in this survey to have been banned, many years before the scandal involving Sam Chifney and the Prince of Wales at Newmarket in 1791, or the 1770

⁸¹YAS Parish Register Section: Parish register of Wensleydale vol. 2 1701-1837 vol. 130 (Leeds 1967), Parish register of Sheffield 1703-1752 vol. 7 vol. 154 (Leeds 1989), Parish register of St.Olave, York 1650-1785 vol. 158 (Leeds 1993)

⁸²Orton 1750, 1751, 1764; Prior Early records p 52

⁸³Orton 1771

⁸⁴Prior Early records p 29; Cheney 1738

'warning-off' given to Thomas Dunn which was said by Prior to be the first official warning off.⁸⁵

The notice to advertise the races at New Malton in 1742 stated that:

Any horse rode by Stephen Jefferson will not be entitled to any of the prizes.⁸⁶

This ban was continued up to and including 1746, and although no other course appears to have publicly taken the same step, Jefferson has not been found to have ridden anywhere after 1741. No official reason has been found for the ban, although one possible explanation for it could be that when he rode Osbaldeston's Traveller to win at York in 1741 there may have been suspicion that too much guile was employed, as in a three horse race, Jefferson came last in the first heat before winning the next two heats comfortably, but no published comment has been found about the ban.⁸⁷ There had been outright accusations of cheating by an unnamed jockey riding Traveller at Wakefield the previous year, resulting in the horse being banned there, and it may have been Jefferson riding on this occasion too.⁸⁸ Jefferson advertised a horse at stud in 1743 at Clifton where he lived but nothing else is known of his fate.⁸⁹ This ban occurred before the Jockey Club was formed, and it clearly shows that the gentry involved in racing could police events for themselves quite easily without recourse to a central organisation. It is significant that in Jefferson's case, like Chifney's, the entire fault was blamed on the jockey, and not on the owner, who would be difficult to punish, but was expected to know that he had been found out. Two other men, both owners, were warned off Yorkshire race courses within a few years of Jefferson's ban. The horses of George Prentice of Richmond were prohibited from the races there because it was thought that serious cheating had taken place with his horse Trimmer, at Newmarket, and a Mr. Lingard's horses were similarly banned at Wakefield.⁹⁰

The value of a jockey's skill does not seem to have been adequately acknowledged during the early eighteenth century; their names were rarely published in the racing calendars or in the press, although even then it was acknowledged that it was essential to have a trustworthy man who fully understood the art of horsemanship with regard to conditions and individual animals, as well as ensuring their welfare. Even so, the owner or trainer dictated the style of riding, and jockeys were expected to remain firmly seated in the saddle, although some preferred to

⁸⁵Vamplew The turf p 80; Prior Calendar p 150

⁸⁶YC 9 Mar 1742

⁸⁷Betting went on between heats, so that a poor showing in an early heat could mean better odds in a later heat.

⁸⁸Orton 1741 Pick vol. 1 p 59

⁸⁹YC 15 Mar 1743

⁹⁰Pick vol. p 104; YC 1 Aug 1751, 2 Sep 1752

decide this action for themselves.⁹¹ Jockeys may have been un-named because they were servants working to orders, giving rise to the belief that the owner was entitled to all of the credit for a win, but other reasons are possible. Cheny's racing calendars were pioneering works in the field of sports reporting and their content was very limited as was the information printed in the newspapers; later, as publishers realised that their readers were interested in many aspects of the sport, more information was given. These publications were aimed at the wealthier end of society who owned, bred and raced horses, and they may have been thought to have had greater interest in reading about other society names than the working-class jockeys. Indeed Cheny declared that his books were for the:

Gentlemen to divert themselves in the midst of Winter, with a Prospect, as it were, of the Sport of the last year... each particular Horse had made at the paces of his running...different Weights and different Courses.⁹²

Summary

It has been possible to identify many members of the upper and gentry classes who owned racehorses, but it has been impossible to identify with certainty, most people of lesser rank from the multitude of similar names, therefore the majority of owners remain just names. This survey has been mainly confined to the people identified, of whom the Yorkshire based owners form the largest section. The survey of the residences of racehorse owners shows that people tended to enter at race meetings relatively close to their homes, or centres of entertainment, or where the prize value, or the presence of similar people to make bets with, made the journey worthwhile. The Yorkshire courses were particularly supported by owners from areas further north who wanted to race at places which, although they were not their local courses, were not as distant as Newmarket. Remote or unfashionable courses were unable to attract enough competitors with good horses to improve their status as reputable race meetings and without this, they were doomed to closure. The support of local racehorse owners was therefore essential to the viability of a meeting, but there would be little interest in a small meeting if the date clashed with a society event like Newmarket races. The majority of owners entered for only between one to three races, and so their participation in the sport must have been quite short-lived for various reasons including the expense involved or a lack of success.

The degree of involvement in the training of racehorses by the owners is difficult to ascertain and probably varied from that of the minor owners who trained their own horses, to the employment of special training grooms on the estates of the major owners; in between were those owners who instructed the jockeys and lads who rode for them. All of the breeders were

⁹¹Wallis np section on Matches

⁹² Mortimer p 8

very conscious of the value of a horse's pedigree and they bred from proven winners whenever they could, as these foals could be sold at a profit, even when untried. The trainers, whether owners or servants, were concerned with ground conditions as well as with speed and jockey weights, and some even carried out their trials before dawn, to keep the form of an animal secret, which would hopefully enable the owners to reap the benefit of their work. The timing of trials and races shows that some owners were using accurate and scientific methods of assessing their horses' fitness and likelihood of success. The reported times that the horses ran, prove that early horse races were not run as slow, waiting events that were decided in a quick dash over the last mile or so, and that they were run at almost the same pace as modern races. Jockeys' names were rarely published, as they too were servants, and so had little social influence, but they were greatly under valued at this time, as so much in a race depended on their judgement and skill. They do not appear to have been under contract to any one man, and were likely to have been freelance. Only towards the end of the century were jockeys and trainers really acknowledged as professionals and the gentry placed more of the responsibility for racehorses in their hands. Race organisers were able to refuse to enter owners and riders whom they believed to have cheated, and publicly announced their prohibition.

CHAPTER 6

THE STATUS OF THE RACEHORSE OWNERS

'A diversion more used in England than in all the world beside.'¹

This section addresses the identity and type of people who owned racehorses; the sources of information are the same as those used for Chapter 5. Successful racing was not a cheap hobby, and unless an owner had a huge amount of good fortune, it could set them back large sums, especially when taking part in matches. Where information is available, the amount of money (and its source) that an owner had at his disposal has been examined and this has helped to show how they used their resources. The positions of the owners in the hierarchy of eighteenth century Britain have been examined with regard to titles, offices, appointments, and elected positions, to show what part the people who were racehorse owners played in the Hanoverian government and administration. The leading men of the government were well represented amongst the racing fraternity; 10% of the members of the House of Lords raced horses in Yorkshire and around 30% of the identified owners at Yorkshire races were knights or holders of other titles. Members of Parliament, who were rich and influential, were also great supporters of Yorkshire racing. 50 British MPs have been identified as owners at Yorkshire race meetings, and out of 79 men who were elected as Yorkshire MPs during the period studied, nineteen owned race horses. Some appear to have used racing as a means of gaining popularity amongst the voters either by entering horses for races or by providing prize money for the races. The members of the Houses of Lords and Commons and their families were the people who were usually appointed to high public office and positions in the Royal Household; all of these assignments enabled the holder to wield considerable power and influence at court, as well as in the countryside apart from making considerable financial gains. This group also included many of the highest-ranking soldiers. Many of these eminent men were actively involved in horse racing, but it is notable that no senior judges have been identified. However, the laymen involved in the administration of justice were notably active in racing circles; many JPs and members of the Grand Jury at the York Assizes owned racehorses. Several owners were professional men and their occupations and status have been investigated. The clergy, lawyers, and medical men who owned racehorses show that many men of these classes were involved in the sport, although, as might be expected, no bishops took part, and the church authorities discouraged any form of gambling.

A major event during the period studied was the Jacobite invasion of England in 1745, and the part that racing and racing people played in this incident has been examined, with surprising information coming to light that York races may have been a cover for intrigue. It is certain

¹Fairfax p 25

that racing men were active on both sides, either as soldiers, supporters or espionage agents. Religion was a contentious matter in the government of eighteenth century Britain, but although Roman Catholics were not allowed, by law, to own valuable horses, it is apparent that many did, and raced them publicly with no complaint from other competitors; only one Presbyterian owner has been identified.

A few horses were raced in women's names, but no evidence has been found to show that women played a significant part in racing. The greatest number of owners remain unidentified, which indicates that they were not particularly involved in racing, or were of relatively low status, although a few farmers, tradesmen and professional jockeys have been found.

6.1 Female owners

It is unlikely that many women were really racehorse owners in the sense that they bred or purchased and trained horses, although Queen Anne had taken a positive and practical interest in horse racing in the period before the dates studied in this chapter. The queen owned several very good horses, but on a day-to-day basis, her equine interests were taken care of by her Master of Horse. She regularly attended race meetings and provided valuable prizes from her Privy Purse. Queen Anne's horses raced unsuccessfully at York in 1712 and 1713 in her own Royal Plate races, but in 1714, her horse 'Star' won a race for £14 against competition from the Lord Chamberlain's horse and several others.² Three other female owners have been found to have entered horses at York or Hambleton in the years before this study. At Black Hambleton in 1717, Mrs. Carr entered a horse, in 1719 a Mrs. Layton is listed, and Mrs. Betty Savile entered at York in 1724, but as their horses do not appear in the stud book, nothing is known about their quality, and they are not known to have raced again.³ Orton named nine women as owners at Yorkshire race meetings between 1727-1749. Seven of these were either the wives or daughters of known male owners, and in five of these cases, i.e. Betty, Dolly and Judith Routh, Miss Hale, and Mrs. Meek, the horses named were at other times raced under the ownership of a man of the family. Cuthbert Routh's daughters are sometimes named as the owners of various of his horses, but the same horses were usually run in his name, and the stud book invariably attributes ownership to him. Prior states that Routh often ran his horses in the names of his daughters.⁴ The horse entered by Miss Hale appears in the studbook as the property of Mr. Hale,⁵ and similarly, both Mr. and Mrs. Meek have been separately named as

²Orton 1712, 1714. The Lord Chamberlain was Sir William Strickland of Boynton Yorkshire, and the horse was Merlin, probably the same one that is usually said to have been responsible for the legends about Yorkshire horses and the famous race against Tregonwell Frampton's horse that is said to have resulted in the law that made the recovery of certain gambling debts illegal. 9 Anne c14; R. Longrigg, The English squire and his sport (London 1977) p 140

³Mrs Betty Savile, wife of the future Marquess of Halifax; Cook p 206; Orton 1712-1714, 1719, 1724; Pick *passim*

⁴ Prior, Early records p 20. After Routh's death in 1751, his wife entered one of his horses at Wakefield in 1752; Nutmeg, Crazy, Rib, and Othello were raced by both Routh and his daughters. Orton 1736, 1742, 1744

⁵Pick vol. 1 p 115; Orton 1749

the owner of the horse 'Merry Andrew'.⁶ It is likely that the women were allowed to enter a horse in their name, and perhaps keep the winnings. Two women whose husbands raced horses, each ran one horse, albeit unsuccessfully, entirely in their own names; Lady Lowther, the wife of Sir William, entered at Beverley, Wakefield and York in 1730,⁷ and Lady Coningsby, a baroness and heiress in her own right, the wife of Sir Michael Newton, who was a successful breeder and owner, entered at York and Salisbury in 1739-1740.⁸ Another lady with the same surname as a male owner, a Miss Mayes, entered a horse at Richmond in 1747.⁹ A Madam Ayre is the only female owner found to have entered at Kiplingcotes.¹⁰ All of the horses that were entered in the names of women, but were probably the property of a male relative, can be found in the stud book under the man's name, but none of the horses entered solely by women have been found at all in the Stud Book, which indicates clearly that those horses were unsuccessful and of little commercial value; they neither won races nor produced winning offspring. Thus, none of the women who had connections with horse racing achieved any personal success. In the eighteenth century the practical aspects of horse racing were probably part of the men's world; buying, breeding, training and dealing with the other people in the business were really only open to men. The great majority of owners were men and in such a male-dominated society, where most women had little control over their own money or property, it is unlikely that any women who wanted to take up racing seriously would have been tolerated by, or have received the co-operation of the racing fraternity. It would appear that women were only allowed to play at horse racing, the real business of the sport was carried out by men.

6.2 Titled owners

The importance of the landed aristocracy and gentry during the eighteenth century cannot be overestimated; they monopolised political power from the House of Lords, their positions at court, and by their influence as great landowners. Many of the largest land owning families were able to place their own representatives in the House of Commons because they controlled the votes for the towns that they owned. 67 Yorkshire racehorse owners had titles and four were 'honourable'; there were eleven dukes, one marquis, eight earls, four viscounts, one viscountess, one baron, 39 baronets, one lord and one lady, and 26 of these were members of the House of Lords. In 1728 there were 221 peers entitled to vote in that house, although there

⁶ Orton 1733; Pick vol.1 p 62

⁷ Cheny 1730

⁸ Cheny 1739, 1740

⁹ Cheny 1747

¹⁰ Cheny 1727

were usually less than 100 attending at any one time.¹¹ The peers who were members of the House of Lords obtained this status either by succeeding to hereditary titles, or were peers who were appointed by the Crown; many were established aristocrats, and all were powerful and influential men. More than 10% of these raced horses in Yorkshire in the period studied, and a great many more raced at other courses, particularly at Newmarket. The prestigious races at York and Black Hambleton were popular occasions for the aristocracy to enter their horses. The Dukes of Ancaster, and Bolton, the Earls Godolphin, and Portmore, and the Viscounts Weymouth and Lonsdale, all had horses that raced there.¹² So did the Duke of Somerset, who owned vast tracts of land in Yorkshire, and was the senior Protestant Duke of the House of Lords. Although he was not classed as an able politician, he had considerable influence both in Parliament and at court. His stud was famous, and he raced occasionally in Yorkshire, but most often at Newmarket.¹³ The Earl of Carlisle, another major landowner in Yorkshire, was Lord of the Treasury at the turn of the century, and one of the leading racehorse owners pre c.1728.¹⁴ Lady Coningsby, a Viscountess in her own right, did not sit in the Lords, but she entered a horse at York races.¹⁵ Lord Byron, a baron of Nottinghamshire raced once at Doncaster.¹⁶ The largest number of titled racing men, totalling 39, were baronets, and these included Sir Ralph Assheton of Lancashire, Sir Marmaduke Wyvill of Yorkshire and Sir James Cunyngham of Scotland, who all at some time raced at the less important meetings as well as at York.¹⁷ Some gentlemen dabbled in racehorse owning, but rapidly lost interest - Lord James Cavendish, the younger son of the Duke of Devonshire, another large Yorkshire landowner, raced just once at York, and Lord William Hamilton, the son of the Duke of Hamilton, had a racehorse called 'Wanton Willy' for just one year in 1732.¹⁸ The gentlemen described as 'honourable' were the younger sons of earls, like George Shirley, the son of Earl Ferrers.¹⁹ Many aristocrats had been elected as Members of the House of Commons before succeeding to their hereditary titles and seats in the House of Lords.

¹¹ A.S. Turberville, The House of Lords in the eighteenth century (Oxford 1927) p 5

¹² Orton 1727, 1729, 1733

¹³ Turberville p 101 n1; Somerset was known as the proud Duke for his arrogance. Marlborough ranked his abilities low 'as incommensurate with any dignity greater than that of Master of the Horse'; Cook p 118

¹⁴ Cockayne vol.3 p 35

¹⁵ Cockayne vol.3 p 397

¹⁶ Cheny 1745; Cockayne vol.2 p 456

¹⁷ Cheny 1727-1731, 1732-1743

¹⁸ Park p 135; Orton 1730; Sedgwick vol.2 p 102; Cheny Boroughbridge, Leeds, Pontefract 1732

¹⁹ Burke p 1708

6.3 Members of Parliament

It has been estimated that up to two thirds of all parliamentary seats at this time were under the private patronage of a few families. During the eighteenth century, the emerging industrial areas were grievously under-represented because the scarcity of the population in those districts in the Middle Ages, when Parliamentary seats had been allocated, did not justify representation by an MP, and it had not been in the interests of the men who controlled the existing seats to enfranchise more people.²⁰ The Members of Parliament, who were officially unpaid, found plenty of time for business and pleasure interests outside of their governmental duties. The House of Commons normally sat from about 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Parliament met for perhaps only four or six months of the year. At least 53 men who entered their horses for races in Yorkshire from 1727 to 1749, were, or had been, Members of Parliament for England, Scotland or Wales, and clearly the proportion of racehorse-owning MPs is far greater than would be expected if the ownership of racehorses had been spread evenly across the whole population. In the early eighteenth century, at any one time there were 558 Members, of Parliament,²¹ some of whom were regularly returned over a period of 30 or 40 years, whilst others spent much shorter times at Westminster. The men who became MPs were invariably from the most privileged strata of society and were there to represent their own class and interests at a time when less than 17% of the adult male population was enfranchised.²² Thus, the Parliamentarians were amongst the very wealthiest and most influential men in Britain. The reasons for becoming unpaid MPs were not usually connected with philanthropy or the public good, but were mainly for the power and likely appointment of themselves or their relations to lucrative state positions, which membership of Parliament provided. Public and official positions were not advertised, nor were candidates interviewed; all appointments were in the gift of someone else, so that a complex system of bargaining was in force.²³ After 1710, a basic requirement to hold a seat to represent a county was the ownership of land worth £600, and for a borough seat, a man had to own land worth £300.²⁴ This effectively excluded the non land-owning classes, even if they had been able to afford to pay their election expenses, which could be considerable, and often ran into thousands of pounds.²⁵ The rewards of public office were abundant - the salaries that were paid to holders of official posts, which were usually filled by Members, were much sought after, and this made the cost of winning elections most worthwhile. The Septennial Act of 1716 gave MPs seven years tenure on a seat, instead of the earlier term of three years, and this

²⁰Hay & Rogers p 191

²¹Sedgwick vol. 1 pp 1, 3

²²Hay & Rogers p 113

²³Plumb England p 38

²⁴Porter p 108; Wilson p 258

²⁵Hay & Rogers p 58

caused the cost of acquiring a seat in the Commons to rise even further as the period of office and thus power was extended.²⁶ This did not trouble those rich landed families who were able to regard Parliamentary seats as family heirlooms that could be handed down or sold to the highest bidder, because they owned the burgage lands that entitled the owners to vote. In the days of public ballots, where the poll books could be scrutinised by anyone to see how individuals had voted, landowners could force their tenants to vote for a particular candidate.²⁷ Hay and Rogers estimate that around two-thirds of all MPs were returned by private patronage of this kind. It was only in the larger urban constituencies that the voice of the 'middling' kind of people was at all represented, but these places were expensive to the candidates. In Hull for example, in the mid century, electors expected to be paid two guineas for their vote as a sort of birthright,²⁸ so that where men had a free vote, they probably voted for the highest bidder. The greatest land owning families were well represented by their sons, whilst many Irish peers and English baronets were elected in places where their families had land and influence.²⁹ A particular perquisite for the great landowners was the ability to use their Parliamentary power to go above the laws and customs of the land, by means of private Acts of Parliament, which could easily allow them to enclose areas, change water courses or develop harbours, often to the detriment of smaller people. Plumb declared: 'A private Act of Parliament legitimised what might otherwise be seen as an act of robbery or injustice.' Much of Parliament's time was taken up with this type of business in an age that most certainly did not believe in democracy.³⁰ At least 50 of the racehorse owners were undoubtedly of this influential and wealthy sector of society.

Many fortunes may have been lost by gambling on horse races, but there is no doubt that some men also gambled their fortunes on acquiring a seat in Parliament. The racehorse owner Emanuel Scrope Howe, was fortunate in that his mother-in-law was mistress to George I, and so he was made Governor of Barbados, with a huge salary after he was left almost penniless by the vast costs of the 1732 elections,³¹ but at least three other Yorkshire horse racing men were deeply in debt following the elections - Ralph Jenison was forced to sell property to pay his election expenses,³² whilst John Neale and Sir William Middleton were almost ruined by

²⁶ Hay & Rogers p 58; Porter p 108

²⁷ Hay & Rogers pp 188, 57

²⁸ Hay & Rogers pp 191, 57

²⁹ Hay & Rogers p 189

³⁰ Plumb England p 40

³¹ Sedgwick vol.2 p 154

³² Sedgwick vol.2 p 176

their Parliamentary ambitions rather than racing.³³ If these men had followed only one of these interests they might have remained solvent, but two risky ventures were more than many fortunes could withstand

The electors of Yorkshire were represented by 30 Members of Parliament at any one time, and a total of 79 different men were elected over the period studied. Nineteen of these men entered horses in Yorkshire races between 1727 and 1749 - almost one quarter of them. These were all from Yorkshire land-owning families, and all but three would have classed Yorkshire as their main domicile. William Aislaby of Studley Royal, who represented Ripon for sixty years, and William Osbaldeston of Hunmanby, who represented Scarborough, were local residents and landowners,³⁴ whilst Sir Michael Newton of Gloucester, and Charles Pelham of Lincolnshire, who both represented Beverley did not normally live in Yorkshire. The latter two inherited the property and influence of their uncle, Sir Michael Wharton of Beverley.³⁵ During 1722-1727, the time that Newton represented Beverley, he entered his horses in the races at York, but after this, when he changed his seat to Grantham, he rarely raced in Yorkshire again, and entered at courses in the southern half of England. Pelham took over the Beverley seat from his cousin in 1727, the same year that he entered a race at York.³⁶ They may have felt that as the local MPs they had to be seen to play their part in the social infrastructure of the area, of which the zenith was York. The provincial capital was also the place where the main political discussions took place, arrangements were made and deals were done; politicians were observed and could make the most of such an opportunity to impress the voters. Pelham supported Beverley, his constituency's local race meeting by providing the prize money of £20-£30 for races there in 1739 and 1740. In conjunction with his fellow member, Sir William Coddington, he donated £50 in both 1748 and 1749.³⁷ A third Beverley MP who owned race horses, was Ellerker Bradshaw; during his term of office, he gave prizes of £10 in 1739, and £15 in 1740, and raced a horse at Beverley in 1737.³⁸ Other Yorkshire MPs without race horses, who thought that donating prize money for race meetings was worthwhile, were Sir George Savile, who gave 20 guineas prize money for the races at York, two months after his election for the county in 1728, and Sir Charles Hotham, who gave fifteen guineas annually during most of his term of office.³⁹ It may be significant that Cholmley Turner donated 20

³³Sedgwick vol. 2 pp 257, 189

³⁴ Sedgwick vol.1 p 411, vol.2 p 314

³⁵Sedgwick vol. 2 pp 314, 295, 329

³⁶ Orton 1723, 1726; Chery 1727-1741

³⁷YC 1 May 1739, 22 Apr 1740, 12 Apr 1748, 11 Apr 1749; Coddington raced at Ascot in 1744

³⁸YC 1 May 1739, 22 Apr 1740

³⁹Orton 1728; HUL DDHO 15/16 estate accounts 1727-1738; Sedgwick vol. 1 p 358

guineas to York races one month after the death of a Yorkshire MP, and was subsequently elected to this seat.⁴⁰ Four MPs were amongst the 31 racing men who subscribed towards race prizes at Richmond races between 1724-1730. Sir Marmaduke Wyvill, and Henry Peirse were local MPs, whilst Sir Michael Newton represented Grantham by then, and Ralph Jenison sat for Northumberland; they all entered horses as subscribers.⁴¹ There is much evidence of financial support for the public events of horse racing by MPs; in the case of subscription races, where the members also entered horses, this is a legitimate payment because this was a means of providing a prize at the expense of the contestants, but gifts of cash for prizes does suggest sweeteners to the electors. However, it is difficult to tell where the authorities drew the line with illegal practices and various types of bribery at this time, as many elections seem to have been corrupt to some degree. Ellerker Bradshaw's election victory at Beverley in 1727 was declared void, and his agents were jailed for 'notorious and scandalous bribery and corruption', which resulted in the passing of the Bribery Act of 1729.⁴² One of the men responsible for setting out this bill was the member who was most active in supporting the Jacobite Rising in 1745, Sir Watkins Williams Wynn.⁴³ The actual race meetings provided excellent opportunities for parliamentary candidates to meet the voters; during a hard fought and costly contest in 1734, Sir Miles Stapleton canvassed the voters at Leeds races and was subsequently elected.⁴⁴

The number of Tory and Whig MPs who owned race horses was not in the same proportion as the number of members of each party in Parliament. It is only possible to make estimates of the numbers of each party, as party membership was not as distinct as it is today; there was no nationally co-ordinated party office or agents - the parties were built up from a system of local and regional alliances controlled by magnates, but using Sedgwick's estimates it seems likely that the Whig factions in Parliament outnumbered the Tories by about 3.5 or 4:1,⁴⁵ and out of a total of 76 men elected for the Yorkshire seats, 63 were probably Whigs, eleven Tories and two undetermined, which made the Whig to Tory ratio approximately 6:1. This survey has found 31 Whig owners and seventeen Tories, a ratio of about 5:3, which suggests that the Tory Parliamentary gentlemen were often keen racehorse owners. Amongst the Whig owners were Thomas Frankland of Thirkleby Park, whose family owned the parliamentary seat of Thirsk, and Emanuel Scrope Howe who represented Nottinghamshire.⁴⁶ The Tory MPs who raced

⁴⁰Orton 1726; Park p 25

⁴¹Prior Early records p 64

⁴²Sedgwick vol. 1 p 482

⁴³Sedgwick vol. 2 p 543

⁴⁴Sedgwick vol. 2 p 442. J.A.Cartwright, ed. The Wentworth papers 1705-1739 (London 1883) p 513. Stapleton spoke from a scaffold which collapsed due to the weight of gentlemen crowding upon it, fortunately only two men standing under it were injured

⁴⁵Sedgwick vol. 1 pp 37, 42, 46, 47, 57

⁴⁶ Sedgwick vol. 2 pp 50, 154

horses in Yorkshire included Sir John Stapylton of Myton, MP for Yorkshire and Sir Hugh Smithson of Stanwick, MP for Middlesex.⁴⁷ Following the Jacobite rising of 1715, Tories were proscribed from public office, and some found this situation worse than changing their political allegiance, and so they joined the Whig party.⁴⁸

6.4 Public office and the Royal Household

One of the perquisites of parliamentary membership was the availability of lucrative public offices and sinecures; some of the racing men were amongst the highest ranking ministers. The salaries that went with these offices provided a major source of income as well as influence and power for the upper classes, and the fact that so many racing men were public officials is indicative of their status. They were able to appoint friends and relatives to civil service positions or to sell them to the highest bidder.⁴⁹ Many horse-racing men were appointed to these positions because they were peers or Members of Parliament or they had influence with powerful politicians, or the royal household. The highest and richest positions went to the aristocrats. The aristocracy and gentry were much preoccupied with political intrigue and seeking patronage, which went hand in glove with Court and Parliamentary positions and the way to official sinecures, was often via Parliament. Once a position was achieved, very little effort was required to perform the obligations of the office, which of course allowed for plenty of time for recreation, as the actual duties, if any, were usually undertaken by a grateful clerk at £50 yearly salary. The level of public office filled by racehorse owners ranged from tax collector to Lord Chancellor. Some of the highest and best paid positions were nominally in the Royal Household which provided the vast majority of posts for the loyal supporters of the State, which was in effect headed by the Crown. All decisions and places were discussed with the Sovereign, although the final word was Parliament's because it controlled the purse. All ministers of state were the Crown's servants who were appointed and dismissed by the Sovereign, and were thus dependent upon his support for their power. In the days before Parliamentary parties were organised into strong factions, the method of preventing anarchy and keeping control in the hands of the executive was to give places i.e. salaries and influence, to those who filled the otherwise unpaid offices in the ministries.⁵⁰

Amongst the racehorse owners, the Earl of Halifax at one time held the greatest sinecure in all England as the Auditor of the Exchequer at £7,000 per annum.⁵¹ Earl Godolphin, another of

⁴⁷ Sedgwick vol. 2 pp 442, 428

⁴⁸ Porter p 110

⁴⁹ Hay & Rogers pp 58-60

⁵⁰ Plumb England p 37

⁵¹ Sedgwick vol. 2 p 267

the most important political and racing figures, also held a range of lucrative public offices, including Groom of the Stole, for which he was paid £2,000 annually.⁵² Official posts could be lost at a stroke if the political or royal patron became dissatisfied by a lack of loyalty on the part of the protege - the Duke of Bolton had been Governor of the Isle of Wight, and held several other offices as well as being a Colonel in the Horse Guards until he fell foul of Walpole in 1733 over the doomed Excise Bill, and he not only lost his offices, but was discharged from his regiment.⁵³ Although he was a very rich man, with an annual income of £20,000, within two years of his dismissal, his racing at Newmarket, the most expensive place to race, dropped from five races annually to one, then none, although he continued to use the lesser courses, particularly those near to the New Forest where he was a major landowner. He may have preferred to race at places where he would be less likely to meet his enemy, Walpole, who was also a Cambridgeshire landowner. After his reinstatement in the army in 1740, the duke almost retired from racing.⁵⁴ The Duke of Hamilton resigned his court positions in 1733 over the same dispute with Walpole, but appears to have taken up horse racing at the same time.⁵⁵ Some of the racing men held positions of national importance - Sir William Strickland MP at various times for Malton, Scarborough, and Carlisle, became Commissioner of the Revenue, a Lord of the Treasury at £1,000 salary, a Privy Counsellor and Secretary of State for War - a position of great trust and profit, whilst Sir Thomas Frankland held several posts including Commissioner of the Board of Trade, and received £1,000 annual salary and a house in the Admiralty for eleven years as Privy Counsellor and Lord High Admiral, one of the Great Offices of State, which meant that he was responsible for all maritime affairs including the government of the Royal Navy.⁵⁶ Both men became outstandingly wealthy from these offices of national security, but were not prevented by their duties from horse racing.

Three racehorse owners were Collectors of Land Tax - Henry Ibbetson of Denton, Andrew Wilkinson of Boroughbridge, and Francis Appleyard of Newbald. Although Appleyard and Wilkinson were responsible for a series of accounting errors, they continued in the posts.⁵⁷ The Hon. Henry Vane MP was the most notable incompetent public official; he was generally ridiculed, but still became Paymaster General, Lord of the Treasury, and a Privy Counsellor,

⁵²R. Beatson, A political index to the histories of Great Britain and Ireland (London 11806) vol. 1 p 425. The stole was the long ceremonial robe worn by the King on State occasions.

⁵³ Cockayne vol. 2 p 212; A.W.Ward, ed. The Cambridge modern history (Cambridge 1909) vol. 6 p 70

⁵⁴Races and matches at Newmarket were regularly arranged, and advertised, as much as two years in advance, and the stakes were paid as 'play or pay' whether a contestant raced or pulled out, so once a match had been agreed there was nothing to lose by running it.

⁵⁵Cockayne vol. 6 pp 269-270

⁵⁶Roebuck p 50; Beatson vol. 1 pp 173, 348, 384

⁵⁷CTBP vol. 5 pp 108, 116, 327, 546; Sedgwick vol. 1 p 365

due to the influence of his uncle, the Duke of Newcastle, who had the ultimate power of preferment.⁵⁸ Other racing men in receipt of official salaries for very little work, included Frederick Frankland, who, like many merchants, advanced, probably with his father's help, to become a Director of the Bank of England and a Commissioner in Excise, and in Revenue.⁵⁹

Lucrative positions at court were in the gift of the Crown, resulting in the appointment of people who were sympathetic to the royal cause as their personal servants, to take charge of administrative positions in the royal household. The rank of Master of the Horse, or Gentleman of the Bedchamber were much sought after positions because as well as huge salaries and profits, the incumbents were able to take commissions from contractors and suppliers, as well as to hand out lesser appointments to the highest bidder.⁶⁰ The real work that went with these posts could easily be delegated to a poorly paid servant, but on state occasions, a place close to the monarch was reserved for the office-holder. Almost all of the titled racehorse owners held some kind of office at court, as did many MPs. Some of the positions were of a sporting nature, others in the household or military services. Several horse-racing men used their expertise to gain posts. Thomas Panton, a Cambridgeshire landowner, without a title or Parliamentary seat, was the Keeper of the Royal Running Horses to King George II, and one of the most prominent racing men of his day, concentrating his activities in southern England; on only two occasions did he venture as far north as York races. The Duke of Somerset had been appointed Master of Horse to Queen Anne, but was dismissed in 1712, for political reasons.⁶¹ Sir Conyers D'arcy was Master of Horse to Queen Anne and George I,⁶² and Sir Hugh Smithson was Master of Horse to George II; the salary for this post was £1,276.⁶³ D'arcy also held posts as Master, then Comptroller of the King's Household, and Privy Counsellor for which he received £1,200.⁶⁴

Four racing men received salaries as Masters of Hounds to the Crown. The Earl of Carlisle was appointed in 1730 to the post of Master of Foxhounds and Harriers to the King, at a yearly salary of £2,000.⁶⁵ Lord Robert Sutton and then the Duke of Kingston were Master of the

⁵⁸Sedgwick vol. 2 p 491; George II called him a silly cur, and his Treasury appointment was said by Walpole to be 'scandalous and ridiculous', he was said to be 'employed in opening and shutting the door for the Duchess of Newcastle's latest favourite, a common pig, that she had brought from Hanover.' Plumb England p 43

⁵⁹Sedgwick vol. 2 p 50

⁶⁰Roebuck p 84

⁶¹K.Feiling, A history of England (London 1970) p 625

⁶²Beatson vol. 1 p 445

⁶³ Sedgwick vol.2 p 428

⁶⁴ Cockayne vol. 4 p 70

⁶⁵Earl of Carlisle, Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle HMC (London 1897) p 77

Staghounds in Sherwood Forest at £1,600,⁶⁶ and Ralph Jenison was appointed Master of the Buckhounds to George III.⁶⁷ The duties attached to these positions were extremely light, although Jenison was responsible for the kennels at Windsor, but it is doubtful whether the King ever hunted in Sherwood Forest, nor is he known to have kept hounds there, so Sutton and Kingston certainly received sinecures, as did the five owners of Yorkshire racehorses who took salaries as Rangers of Royal Parks, including the Earl of Halifax who was the Ranger of Bushey Park,⁶⁸ and Viscount Weymouth, the Ranger of St. James' Park. Weymouth was said by Dean Swift to 'incline a little too much to his stable and dog-kennel.'⁶⁹

Ten racing peers were Lords or Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, including the Earl of Crawford, and the Duke of Leeds;⁷⁰ this post required little effort in return for a great deal of status. The much sought after rank of Privy Counsellor, held by at least seven racing peers, was a formal title with enormous power. Only the most trusted royal advisors and politicians, including the Great Officers of State, were given this position, including the Duke of Ancaster and Earl Gower.⁷¹ Decisions of policy were made by the inner cabinet consisting of, among others, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Privy Seal; the latter position was filled at various times by Viscount Lonsdale, and four other racing peers.⁷² Knights of the Garter, Bath and Thistle were honoured but unpaid, these accolades indicated royal approval of the ten holders who raced in Yorkshire.⁷³ Real power was also vested in those trusted men who performed the duties of the Lords Justice of the Realm in the King's absence, which of course with a Sovereign whose interests were divided between Britain and Hanover, carried a good deal of responsibility. Seven of the peers who raced in Yorkshire were appointed to this most trusted position, including the Earls Gower, Carlisle and Halifax.⁷⁴

6.5 Judges

The professional judges of the High Courts have not been found amongst the racing men although five peers who raced in Yorkshire were granted the sinecures of Chief Justice in Eyre, a title reserved for aristocrats. The Duke of Ancaster held the degree of Doctor of Civil Law,

⁶⁶CTBP vol. 3 pp 493, 626

⁶⁷CTBP vol. 4 pp 409,530

⁶⁸Sedgwick vol. 2 p 242

⁶⁹Cockayne vol. 12 pp 588-9

⁷⁰ Cockayne vol. 3 p 521, vol.7 p 514

⁷¹ Cockayne vol. 1 p 128, vol.6 p 37

⁷²Plumb England p 49

⁷³C.Cook & J.Stevenson, eds. British historical facts 1688-1760 (London 1988)

⁷⁴ Cockayne vol. 3 p 35, vol. 6 pp 37, 246

whilst the Earl of Halifax and two other racing grandees, Earl Gower and the Marquis of Granby appear to have been awarded LL.D. by Cambridge University.⁷⁵ It is not known for certain whether any of these degrees were honorary, but the men's ranks involved no judicial duties and it is unlikely that they could have fitted a long period of study into their hectic Parliamentary, military and social lives. The unpaid position of justice of the peace was always filled by local gentlemen who acted as magistrates and administrators of local government, tasks that were accepted as a duty of their status. One of the most conscientious holders of this office was also a racing man, Sir James Pennyman. The justices were also expected to act as the Grand Jury at the Assizes, and the names of many racehorse owners can be found in the Grand Jury lists for the York Summer Assizes, which was of course followed by the race meeting e.g. Richard Langley, William Osbaldeston, Henry Ibbetson, and Sir George Cooke.⁷⁶

6.6 Sheriffs and Lord Lieutenants

Another position in the gift of the Crown was the top tier of county officialdom, the county Lord Lieutenancy, which had strong political influence that was highly coveted by national political figures. Lord Lieutenants were usually peers of ministerial rank, or high court officials, and as such commanded the local militia and distributed Crown patronage including the appointment of the justices of the peace.⁷⁷ At least ten Lord Lieutenants were appointed from amongst the racing men. The Duke of Ancaster was Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, the Duke of Bolton and Sir Conyers D'arcy were Lord Lieutenants of Yorkshire, the Earl of Carlisle and Viscount Lonsdale were Lord Lieutenants of Cumberland, and the Duke of Devonshire was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.⁷⁸ A lesser rank was that of county High Sheriff; he was also a Crown representative and, although his status was below the Lord Lieutenant, he could wield particular power over the administration and protocol of the parliamentary elections, which allowed him vast scope for abuse of the system.⁷⁹ Between 1727 and 1749, at least twelve racing men held the rank of High Sheriff for Yorkshire, including Thomas Duncombe of Helmsley, and Hugh Bethell of Rise. The High Sheriff for 1745, Henry Ibbetson, a racing man, was created a baronet for his part in counteracting the Jacobite rising.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Cockayne vol.1 p 128, vol. 6 pp 37, 246, vol. 11 p 267

⁷⁶ Roebuck p 55; YC 17 Mar, 21 Jul 1741, 26 Jul 1743

⁷⁷ Plumb England p 36; Porter p 123

⁷⁸ Cockayne vol. 1 p 128, vol. 2 p 212, vol. 3 p 35, vol. 4 p 70, vol. 8 p 133

⁷⁹ Porter p 123

⁸⁰ Roebuck p 28; Sedgwick vol. 1 p 627; Burke p 148

6.7 The church, the army and the professions

A great deal of money was made in the eighteenth century by the men who entered the professions of the church, the law, and medicine; other gentlemen made their fortunes as soldiers.⁸¹ Many of the younger sons of gentry families took up a profession using the influence of their family to further themselves, and many of these professional men were able to afford to race horses, perhaps because of their increased income - racing was not a cheap hobby, and was unlikely to have made many fortunes, although it probably lost some.

The status of the clergy rose considerably in the eighteenth century when George II declared that he intended to give preferment to all clerics who were gentlemen of quality. Previously it had not been customary for people whose families were influential to enter the church, and promotions within that field had thus benefited no one of importance. The king's new notion allowed the church to be exploited for places by the sons of prominent political and society families. A bishopric meant a place in the House of Lords, and thus enormous political influence, which the king realised, could be used to his advantage, by appointing men from families upon whose political loyalty, the Crown could depend. Minor bishoprics were not well paid, but there was the prospect of promotion to great wealth and power. This increase in respectability and improved remuneration of the church as a profession, together with the fact that gentry families usually controlled the appointment of their parish clergy, meant that many younger sons of these families were ordained. It was possible to be the priest in charge of several parishes and yet visit each place rarely, by means of putting a curate in residence to serve the flock, whilst the gentleman priest collected a good income.⁸² A village curate who might receive £30 a year could probably not afford to keep any horse, let alone a racehorse, unless he had family money and multiple livings.

No bishops have been found amongst the race horse owners, although the wealthy brother of an Archbishop of York was the owner of one of the largest number of quality racehorses in the county. John Hutton bred and trained horses at his estate at Marske in north Yorkshire, where the grandeur of the stable block testifies to Hutton's wealth and pride in his horses.⁸³ Five parish priests, all sons of middle ranking county families, could afford to race horses including the Rev. Edmund Garforth, minister of Midhope Chapel near Penistone, and the Rev. Thomas Gee, rector of Cherry Burton and Foxholes, who was also chaplain to the Earl of Albemarle.⁸⁴

⁸¹Porter pp 74-76; Holderness pp 34-35

⁸²Plumb England p 42-44

⁸³ GM vol. 38 1768 p 94

⁸⁴Venn vol. 2 p 205

A commission in the armed forces, particularly the army, had always been a suitable employment for the sons of the gentry and aristocracy, indeed a man either had to be very wealthy or have influential friends to become an officer, as he was usually required to buy his position. Promotion came by a combination of seniority and enough cash to pay for the upgrading. A standing regular army had always posed a potential threat to the government, and so the establishment ensured that the control of the forces was retained firmly in its own grasp by appointing as leaders, men from their own rank in society. Peers, MPs and their families made up the high command of all regiments. Without such patronage, it would have been almost impossible to progress beyond the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.⁸⁵ The rich and influential were able to become high ranking army officers merely by reason of their rank in civilian life. The same names that were found in the highest government and court positions have also been found to be the British army commanders, no doubt by reason of their wealth and friends.

At least twenty men who raced horses in Yorkshire held commissions of some kind in the army; ten of these were long-term career soldiers, and of these, one had raised a regiment against the Jacobite rebellion in 1715, and the other nine were appointed during the Jacobite invasion of 1745. The career soldiers included Colonel Charles Howard, son of the influential Earl of Carlisle, an active soldier and MP who fought at Fontenoy and Dettingen, as well as acting as ADC to George II.⁸⁶ The 'gallant Earl of Crawford' served in the British army and the Imperial Russian army, but not surprisingly, by this time found little time for racing.⁸⁷ Four aristocratic owners are said to have raised regiments to repel the invasion of 1745 - the Duke of Kingston, the Marquis of Granby, and Earls Halifax and Gower; certainly after this date, Kingston, and Granby, said by Pitt to be a splendid soldier, appear in the lists of the general staff, but Halifax and Gower do not.⁸⁸ It is not clear what part the latter men played in the military action, but according to Horace Walpole, many regiments said to have been raised, never materialised, and others saw no action.⁸⁹ At least six Yorkshire men who were owners of racehorses became officers in their local militia regiments, namely Captains Appleyard, Hartley, Hutton, Moyser, Bielby Thompson and Francis Thompson. Only one naval officer, Lord Byron, has been found to have raced, although not whilst holding his commission c. 1738.⁹⁰

⁸⁵A.J.Guy, ed. Colonel Samuel Bagshawe and the army of George II (London 1990) pp 12-14; Porter p 136

⁸⁶Howard was Colonel of the 19th Foot which became the Green Howards; DNB vol. 28 p 142

⁸⁷ Cockayne vol. 3 p 251

⁸⁸ Cockayne vol. 6 pp37, 247, vol. 7 p 308, vol. 11 p 267

⁸⁹F.J.McLynn, The Jacobite army in England 1745 (Edinburgh 1983) pp 2-3

⁹⁰Cockayne vol. 2 p 456

The legal profession had always been open to gentlemen, and during the eighteenth century, it became increasingly attractive as a career to the sons of middle-class families. There appears to have been a class division in the profession; ordinary solicitors were seen to be below the standard of a gentleman, but barristers were thought to be genteel, and it was socially acceptable for the sons of the gentry to enter this field. Practising lawyers were able to acquire princely wealth in an age prone to protracted litigation, and when land equalled status, the acquisition of land and the associated wrangling made the services of lawyers much in demand.⁹¹ During the eighteenth century, many fortunes were made by lawyers who were able to acquire titles to go with the land that they were able to buy.⁹² Lawyers were perhaps the richest professionals, so many of them would have been able to afford to race, but perhaps the reputation of a turfite was not commensurate with the dignity expected of a jurist.⁹³ Two racing men were of sufficient status to become Recorders, an accolade given to the most prominent barristers, the Earl of Exeter at Stamford, and John Stanhope at Doncaster.⁹⁴ Stanhope had been a formidable barrister who had led the Northern Circuit for many years, and like Exeter, was otherwise known for his fighting cocks, racehorses and fox hunting.⁹⁵ Sir Nathaniel Curzon was qualified as a barrister, although he had inherited land and coal mines employing 10,000 miners, which gave him an income of £12,000, and he did not need to work.⁹⁶ Leonard Childers was a Doncaster lawyer who bred racehorses, including the famous Flying Childers, at his family estate near the racecourse at Doncaster, and he is known to have subscribed to the Richmond races.⁹⁷

Five medical men, who moved in wealthy society circles, raced their horses in Yorkshire. One, Cuthbert Constable, was a very rich Roman Catholic landowner who did not practise, but the rest were professional physicians. Henry Bracken was a physician of Lancaster whose interest in horses and their welfare caused him to write a noted learned book on farriery, which was first published in 1737.⁹⁸ Dr Ward of York treated some of the most prominent northerners, although perhaps not always very successfully, for he was said by Lord Bathurst to have poisoned Lord

⁹¹ Plumb England p 46; Wilson pp 6, 9

⁹² Roebuck pp 28-29

⁹³ Hay & Rogers p 23

⁹⁴ D.Duman The judicial bench in England 1727-1875 (London 1982) p 74

⁹⁵ Pick p 484; Foster p 134; H.Owen, Stanhope, Atkinson, Haddon and Shaw (Chichester 1985) pp 66-69

⁹⁶ Sedgwick vol. 1 p 599

⁹⁷ Venn pt 1 vol. 1 p 333

⁹⁸ DNB vol.12 p 33; H.Bracken, Farriery improved or a complete treatise upon the art of farriery etc (London 1737) this went into more than 10 editions and was still published in 1792. Bracken also published works on midwifery, ophthalmology, and stone and gravel in humans. DNB (London 1886) vol. 6 p 142

Strafford with his arsenical draughts to cure the gout;⁹⁹ Ward's daughter married Sir Robert Fagge, a very rich racing baronet.¹⁰⁰ Dr Green of Rotherham and Dr Chambers of Ripon were to be found at many race meetings.

Three owners were professional land agents to great landowners. Andrew Wilkinson was agent to the Duke of Newcastle, Leonard Hartley to the Duke of Bridgewater, and James Preston to the Marquis of Rockingham.¹⁰¹

The Royal Society of London was a group of learned men who endeavoured to promote knowledge and invention in Britain; at least five racing men were amongst its fellows in the period studied. They were all high ranking aristocrats - the Dukes of Hamilton, Leeds, and Devonshire, Earl Crawford and Viscount Lonsdale.¹⁰² Their wealth and positions in British society may have facilitated their membership.¹⁰³ A more social organisation for men was the Freemasons society, and although few records are in existence for this very widespread movement, the names of the men who held the highest ranks in the society were well known. Four of the men who raced in Yorkshire were appointed as Grand Warden or Master Mason of the national body; they were the Duke of Kingston, Earl Crawford, Viscount Weymouth, and Lord Byron.¹⁰⁴ A large proportion of the shareholders in the building fund for the York Assembly Rooms in 1730, which was a meeting place for the rich inhabitants and visitors to the city, were racehorse owners. 46 of the 194 subscribers have been positively identified and many more were probably involved.¹⁰⁵

6.8 Jacobites: supporters and opposition

Some of the MPs who had remained loyal to toryism also openly kept their allegiance to the House of Stuart, and were known to be active in the cause of the Pretender. In particular, Sir Watkins Williams Wynn, joint leader of the Commons' Tories, sometimes called 'the Prince of Wales' because he was outstandingly rich and powerful in that place, was deeply involved in Jacobite plotting and the rebellion of 1745. He had sent word to the Pretender in 1735 that:

⁹⁹Cartwright p 527

¹⁰⁰Sedgwick vol. 2 p 22; Cook p 142 Fagge was one of the greatest gamesters in the field although known for his honesty.

¹⁰¹Sedgwick vol. 2 p 538; SCL Wentworth Woodhouse MSS R/1

¹⁰²Cockayne vol.3. p 251, vol. 4 p 345 vol.6 p 269, vol.7 p 513, vol.8. p 133

¹⁰³The Royal Society does not know the reasons for these men's admissions. Information from the Royal Society.

¹⁰⁴J.Scho, The pocket companion and history of Freemasons (London 1754) pp 110, 111, 125, 187

¹⁰⁵Drake pp lix-bd

he would be always ready to serve him both with his life and his fortune.¹⁰⁶

Wynn usually raced his horses in the middle of England from Chester to Newmarket, but in 1743 he sent a horse to run at York in August - the same summer that he is known to have had a meeting with the emissaries of the Pretender, the Scottish Jacobites and the French Government, to discuss the rising planned for the following year.¹⁰⁷ Entered at the same meeting was a horse owned by the titular Duke of Perth, one of the chief members of the 'Association' that supported the Young Pretender. Perth had been called 'A foolish horse-racing boy' by one of his Whig critics in the early 1740s, but this facade is said by McLynn to have been deliberately cultivated to conceal the fact that he was heavily implicated in the Jacobite movement.¹⁰⁸ During August and September, Louis XV's master of the horse was in England, ostensibly to buy horses, but in reality to report on the readiness of the English Jacobites to support the Scottish rebels.¹⁰⁹ It may all have been coincidental, but York races, in August, with the vast crowds and diversions, could have provided an excellent meeting place where British government spies might be evaded, and the leading Jacobites of England, Wales and Scotland, and the French king's agent could, under cover of equine activities, have conspired to overthrow the Hanoverians. Sir Henry Slingsby, the Tory MP for Knaresborough was also heavily implicated in the plotting and was privy to the invasion plan.¹¹⁰ Neither he nor Wynn was ever prosecuted for their parts in the rising; it had been arranged that they should be at their country estates when the invasion took place. Three other racehorse owning MPs were known to be Jacobite sympathisers, including Sir John Kaye the MP for Yorkshire, Sir Edmund Bacon of Norfolk, and Sir John Stapleton.¹¹¹ Earl Gower had been in touch with the Jacobite leaders in 1718, but after a great deal of preferment from the House of Hanover, allied himself firmly with them and raised a regiment for them in 1745.¹¹² Oliver Cromwell's Puritan Council may have acted sensibly in banning race meetings during the Commonwealth period on the grounds that they provided a rendezvous for Royalists to plot the overthrow of his regime.¹¹³

The Jacobite rising in 1745 appeared to cause little upheaval to Yorkshire racing since most of the action took place in the winter when racing was over. Charles Edward Stuart landed in

¹⁰⁶Sedgwick vol. 1 p 72, vol. 2 p 543. Wynn believed that England was a mere province of Hanover, and also spoke out against hiring 16,000 Hanoverian troops.

¹⁰⁷Sedgwick vol. 2 p 544

¹⁰⁸F.J. McLynn Charles Edward Stuart (London 1988) p 172

¹⁰⁹McLynn Stuart p 77

¹¹⁰Sedgwick vol. 1 p 73, vol. 2 p 425

¹¹¹Sedgwick vol.1 p 426, vol. 2 pp 184, 425

¹¹²Cockayne vol. 6 p 37

¹¹³Feiling p 503

Scotland on 23 July, but even by 21 September, many people including Walpole still did not believe that England would be invaded.¹¹⁴ However, six of the prominent Yorkshire gentry, including three keen racing men, were sufficiently concerned by 11 September 1745 to call a meeting at York Castle for the 24 September, when the Archbishop of York urged the leaders to form militias in case of invasion. Within four days, the arrangements were well underway.¹¹⁵ The Battle of Prestonpans was on the 21 September 1745, and the few courses where races were regularly run in the 1740s had already held their races by then. The last races in Yorkshire, at Wakefield on 2-3 September, were advertised in the York Courant on 20 August, but, as was often the case, no results are available so it is not known for certain if the races were held, or who entered. It was reported by the Archbishop of York that the Papists at Stockton races had been in high spirits after hearing of Charles Edward Stuart's success at Prestonpans, so obviously those races had still been run after the invasion was well under way.¹¹⁶ The results are available for York races, two weeks earlier, and the lists of owners who entered are very similar to the previous years so that it may be concluded that the invasion caused few owners, if any, to withdraw from the race meetings, and by the time the races for 1746 came, the invasion had been repelled, and so the races continued as usual. One racing man became a fearless espionage agent during the invasion of 1745. Dr. Henry Bracken, a physician of Lancaster who was a keen racing man, remained in that town whilst it was occupied by the Jacobite army in November. Bracken, who had studied in Paris and spoke fluent French, actually professed friendship towards Charles Edward Stuart and rode out of Lancaster to join in welcoming the prince, but all the time he was compiling a detailed secret dossier on the invader's strength and his plans for the Duke of Newcastle in London. Bracken was accepted by the Jacobites, enabling him to send valuable intelligence on to London. As soon as the invaders departed for Manchester, Bracken revealed his true colours, and with the town magistrates planned to capture any stragglers. Bracken pursued them with thirty armed men, taking eight prisoners. On the Jacobites' retreat through Lancaster three weeks later, the Bracken house was plundered, and his wife just managed to escape through the cellar. It is ironic that Bracken was subsequently accused by the Whigs of high treason.¹¹⁷

6.9 Wealth and number of horses

The amount of money that a racehorse owner had at his disposal was not always the major factor in deciding how many horses he raced. Some, like the Duke of Bolton, were enormously rich, with over £20,000 a year from his lands, and he owned over 35 horses whereas the Earl of Portmore, known as Beau Colyear, who was said to cut a distinguished figure at both court and

¹¹⁴ McLynn The Jacobite army p 7

¹¹⁵ HLSL L 9.70629 (D-1)

¹¹⁶ L Gooch, The desperate faction (Hull 1988) p 160

¹¹⁷ McLynn The Jacobite army pp 72-78, 158

on the turf, had little income. His own patrimony brought him £500 annually, and his wife, the widow of the Duke of Leeds, had £2,000 annually after he sold part of her jointure for £1,000 when they first married, but he owned and raced over 40 horses in fifteen years which is one of the largest number found in this survey.¹¹⁸ It can only be concluded, as he was never in debt, nor received any official positions, that he managed his racing venture successfully, possibly using his wife's money, and was probably a very good judge of horses. He bought and sold good horses regularly, often making large profits and most likely made money betting on them. Sir Robert Fagge was well known for making money betting on his horses, particularly those that looked as if they were unlikely to win. Defoe said of him:

his horses, they said, were all cheats, how honest soever their master was; for he scarce ever produced a horse but he looked like he was not, and was what nobody could expect him to be.¹¹⁹

Fulke Greville of Wiltshire lost most of his splendid fortune by gambling.¹²⁰ Many others including the Marquis of Granby found themselves deeply in debt due to gambling, whilst the Earl of Halifax squandered his money on racing and his mistress.¹²¹ The Duke of Cleveland's wealth was inherited from his father, the illegitimate son of Charles II, who left him a perpetual annuity worth £8,000.¹²² The most respectable source of wealth was undoubtedly land, the titled gentry tended to avoid active commercial ventures, so that income from trade was probably a far less desirable means of achieving leisure, although most land had originally been purchased with the profits of business. Many of the people who raced owned vast areas of land; the Dukes of Leeds, Somerset, Cleveland, and Devonshire were enormously wealthy from rentals. A number of small land owners can be found amongst the racehorse owners; Francis Appleyard and William Gee inherited relatively small estates whilst Wilberfoss Read of Pocklington and Thomas Galland of Beverley were wealthy farmers.¹²³ Another source of great wealth for some racing men was from the coal that was mined on their land including Sir Nathaniel Curzon, George Bowes and Sir Walter Calverley Blackett.¹²⁴ Income from trade enabled William Carr a merchant of Newcastle to race, and trade with Syria had provided John

¹¹⁸Cockayne vol.10 p 605; Pick passim

¹¹⁹Defoe p 98

¹²⁰Cook p 142; Sedgwick vol. 2 pp 85-86

¹²¹Sedgwick vol. 2 p 240; Cockayne vol. 6 pp 246-247

¹²²Cockayne vol. 3 p 283

¹²³ Allison VCH p 193; J.T.Ward, East Yorkshire landed estates in the nineteenth century (Beverley 1967) p 50; Fairfax Blakeborough vol.1 p 51; YC 17 Mar 1730

¹²⁴Curzon's annual income from mining in which he employed 10,000 men was £12,000, Sedgwick p 599. Bowes dominated the northern coal trade as one of the largest coal owners in Durham. Sedgwick vol. 1 p 479. Blackett inherited mines yielding over £5,000 annually, Roebuck p 40

Brewster Darley with his wealth, and his famous horse, the Darley Arabian; Henry Ibbetson's family were active in the Leeds cloth trade where their annual turnover was £25,000.¹²⁵

6.10 Religion

Religion was a contentious and public matter in eighteenth century Britain; there were many restrictions on non-conformists, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, and although only members of the Church of England were allowed to hold public office, or to serve in the armed forces, others were not totally excluded from high society, but they were by no means readily accepted. Porter wrote that it was a strain to be a gentleman without being Anglican. A blind eye was more easily turned on Protestant dissenters who wanted public office than Roman Catholics, as the former did not support the Jacobites. For reasons of national security, it had been forbidden for Roman Catholics to own arms or any horse worth more than £5 in the time of William III, and the law was not rescinded until after 1745, although there was little support for it.¹²⁶ This law, in theory, made it impossible for any Roman Catholic to have racehorse in his own name. Sir Edward Gascoigne, a Catholic, had his estate searched and his horses removed as late as 1722.¹²⁷ There was usually little appetite amongst their fellow gentry, who were the justices, to pursue such policies, and several powerful Protestants like the Earl of Carlisle, and the Marquis of Rockingham protected their neighbours.¹²⁸ Some Catholic families found it preferable to take the necessary oaths and foreswear their faith, albeit temporarily, than to be excluded from office. Roebuck has quoted Bossy to show that the religious allegiance of Catholic families

was not really determinable for more than one generation... every successive head of a family chose its regime anew.¹²⁹

It is thus very difficult to tell which of the traditionally Catholic families remained so. Strictly according to the law, none of the Catholics should have owned racehorses, but many did; Simon Scroope of Danby, Cuthbert Constable of Burton Constable, the extravagant Thomas Gascoigne of Barnbow, Marmaduke Tunstall of Wycliffe and the agent to Lord Rockingham,

¹²⁵Roebuck p 26; Ward Estates p 37; Sedgwick vol.1 p 532

¹²⁶Porter p 171, 178; H Aveling, Post Reformation Catholicism in East Yorkshire (EYLHS 1960) EYLHS no. 11 p 52; 1 William and Mary c15

¹²⁷LCRO GC/F6/129 25 May 1722

¹²⁸H. Aveling Northern Catholics (London 1966) p 371

¹²⁹Roebuck p 271 quotes J. Bossy, The English Catholic community 1570-1850 (1975) p 150. Two notable and devoutly Catholic racehorse owners, Cuthbert Constable and Sir Marmaduke Constable, however, refused the oath, but no action was taken against them. Roebuck p 262

James Preston.¹³⁰ One Presbyterian who became one of the early members of the Jockey Club, Sir William Middleton of Belsea has been noted; it is said that he kept his Parliamentary seat by the support of the Presbyterian farmers of Northumberland.¹³¹

6.11 Motives for owning racehorses

Horse racing was one of the early organised sports and as such, the people who participated as owners were publicly shown to have a certain status, wealth, and social position. They moved in the same circles as royalty, government ministers and the rich and famous, and could be seen to have plenty of money to spend on pleasure, leisure, and sport, which they shared with all of the public who went to the races for entertainment. As racing results began to be published in the newspapers, their fame would become widespread, not just in racing circles, although not everyone was impressed with such activities. The acclaim that a winning owner received from the crowds and supporters would have been tremendous. This factor was used by some men to gain the approval of local people who would vote for them in Parliamentary elections and was a method resorted to by three Beverley MPs: Ellerker Bradshaw, Charles Pelham and Sir Michael Newton.¹³²

Racing people were viewed by some of their contemporaries with great disdain; their motives were seen to be avaricious, deceitful and dishonest; many writers were shocked at the scenes found at racecourses, including Newmarket and York. Defoe, an astute observer of men, wrote about the nobility and gentry from all parts of England who, whilst at Newmarket:

were all so intent, so eager, so busy upon the sharpening part of the sport, their wagers and bets that to me they seemed just as so many horse-coursers in Smithfield, descending, (the greatest part of them) from their high dignity and quality, to picking one another's pockets... they acted without respect to faith, honour, or good manners.¹³³

Whilst Horace Walpole, a man of great culture, complained of the waste of time and money of the nobility on gambling at race times, and that some of them were obsessed with betting on horses with:

Newmarket, where the Duke is at present making a campaign, with half the nobility and half the money in England attending him: they really say that not

¹³⁰ Aveling Northern Catholics p 371, 398, 401; Roebuck pp 57-58

¹³¹ Sedgwick vol. 2 p 154

¹³² Orton 1727, Cherry Beverley 1737

¹³³ Defoe p 98

less than a hundred thousand pounds have been carried thither for the hazard of this single week.' and ' I could tell you of Lord Mountford...of his keeping aide-de-camps to ride to all parts to lay bets for him at horse races.¹³⁴

Laurence Sterne's friends who went to York races were amazed at the prodigious sums lost, won, or spent on entertainment at race-times.¹³⁵ A letter to the Gentleman's Magazine in 1756 complained of the avarice of the owners and the cruelty to which the horses were subjected supposedly in the name of improving the breed of our horses, when in fact racing did nothing to influence this, and that the English breed of horses would have been better served by allowing farmers and other breeders of horses to use the stallions reserved by the racehorse owners for themselves. Horse racing could not be seen as part of any civilising process taking place in society; it was seen by many as cruel and bringing out an undesirable streak in its participants. The delightful spectacle of the parade of the gentry in their finery and the beauty of the horses was thought to be marred by the horrid way that the horses were beaten by the jockeys, on the orders of the owners. Even a successful horse that had won large sums for its owner and become a profitable stallion would be sold off when it was old for a few pounds as a draught horse.¹³⁶

William Taplin published a comprehensive manual about all aspects of horse-care and racing in which he claimed that it was not possible to make any profit from horse racing without resort to dishonesty; the expense of breeding and training alone was enormous but the presence of large numbers of villains who lived by cheating, prevented honest men winning races. The large sums bet on races invited dishonest men to interfere with races using many methods, including bribery. Gambling can appear to be an easy way to make money, but was the downfall of people of all ranks, although those who owned the horses would feel that they knew the capabilities of their own animals and this might give an advantage when fixing the odds, but if, as Taplin stated was sometimes the case, the jockey was in the pay of the 'Black-Legged Family' of professional cheats, then no one had a chance.¹³⁷

Some owners made a profit from racing, by breeding and selling horses, like Cuthbert Routh, although he did not become fabulously wealthy from it; scores of others hoped to make money but like Sir William Chaytor whose memoirs showed that he was always hoping to sell his racehorses for profit, but never quite managed to do so.¹³⁸ Others went bankrupt or were

¹³⁴H.Walpole, The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's correspondence ed., W.S.Lewis (Yale 1960) vol. 20 p 74; hazard was a game played with dice

¹³⁵W.L. Cross, The life and times of Laurence Sterne (London 1929) p 41

¹³⁶GM vol. 26 1756 pp 417-418

¹³⁷Taplin vol. 2 pp 382-383, 395-396

¹³⁸Ashcroft *passim*

chronically in debt; Thomas Bright, Fulke Greville and the Marquis of Granby were all in reduced circumstances at least partly due to keeping, and gambling on their racehorses. A Frenchman who toured England in the eighteenth century did not believe that gain was the motive behind the English passion for racehorses, but that it was 'tradition, taste and fashion,' but he also wrote that people lost enormous sums and won only a little, even with the very best of luck and described the way that betting was carried out without any paper transactions, that all was done by promises, with failure to pay up dealt with by a beating. He felt that the only way to recoup the enormous expense of ownership was by gambling.¹³⁹

Summary

Most of the identified owners can be seen to come from the richest, most powerful and influential levels of eighteenth century society. The unidentified owners, who were the largest group, must have comprised the men of lesser social and financial standing, who were unsuccessful in horse racing. The men who governed Britain and held positions of enormous trust and power in the House of Lords and the House of Commons were amongst the keenest racing people, and these were the same men who commanded the armed forces and controlled the nation's security. These were the men who surprised Defoe by their behaviour at Newmarket. This survey has found that all influential and affluent sectors of society, large and small landowners, mine owners, merchants, civil servants and professional men all met and competed on the racecourses. It is likely that many lesser men who were farmers and tradesmen were there as well, and if they won, they might boast that they had beaten a duke or an earl, as in theory, every one had the same chance, but in reality the richest could buy the best horses and thus stand a much better chance of winning, unless the Black Legged Family interfered. Several professional men have been identified as racehorse owners, particularly amongst the clerical, medical, and legal groups, although only the middle ranking priests and lawyers have been found - no bishops or judges appear to have had much interest in the turf, and none of the poorer curates and solicitors appear to have owned racehorses. The medical profession was much more independent, with no hierarchy or moral stance to confine the members' personal interests.

The position of women as owners is unclear, but the very few lady owners found in the survey appear to have been allowed by their male relations, to enter a horse in the lady's name, probably for their amusement. Only those horses that are known to have been really owned by the men were successful.

A social activity like horse racing could be used as a cover for more sinister activities and there is a possibility that this happened in 1743, when the Duke of Perth, who used racing as a front

¹³⁹ J. Marchand, ed., A Frenchman's England 1784 (Cambridge 1933) pp 68-70

for his part in organising the 1745 rising, would have met with other pro-Jacobite horse racing men at the main meeting at York to seal their alliance. Racing provided a means of smoothing over religious differences, as Protestants and Roman Catholics met on equal terms, indeed Catholics were banned from many features of gentry life like politics, the army and owning valuable horses, and although the Anglicans could not or would not tolerate Catholic participation in the former activities, they turned a blind eye or encouraged the latter amongst their neighbours.

A great many people in the eighteenth century, as now, spent more on racing as a hobby than they could ever hope to recoup in winnings, but a few, then as now, managed to make a profit out of it. Unsurprisingly, the richest men usually owned most horses, and entered for the most races, although some lesser ones managed quite well and must have succeeded by skilful management and betting. The reasons that people participated in horse racing were individual, some owned racehorses for the pleasure and excitement of racing, which was increased by the status of owning a winning horse. Racehorse owners would be the centre of attention at race meetings and would in theory have a good idea of the capabilities of their horses that would allow them to recoup their expenses by wagering. The shared activity in a sport gave men a common interest that could ignore religion and politics and allow a social meeting for gentry society, but gambling was the major factor for many men. There was little money to be made by breeding and selling horses without a deal of luck. Horse racing undoubtedly played an important role in the social life of a great many of the most influential and wealthy men.

CONCLUSION

And thus the race is at an end,
And so farewell to foe and friend
God send us joy unto our end.
Amen¹

Horse racing was an organised popular sport and entertainment that changed little in essence during the early eighteenth century; the modifications that have been found, were ordered by Parliament that found three reasons for its concern. The principal one, was that race meetings provided too much opportunity for the working classes to waste time and money, a factor which Parliament, or the land owners who controlled it, assumed resulted in the a loss of revenue for the better-off. Secondly, that the methods of cheating by race organisers and horse owners should be made illegal, for the protection of honest racing people. Thirdly, it was believed that the breeders should be producing heavy cavalry horses for the maintenance of national security instead of faster, lighter animals for racing.

The only Bills that became law were those for the Acts of 1740, 1745, and 1784. The discussions in 1715 and 1759 did not result in legislation, as the crisis of 1715 passed quickly, and by 1759, the embryonic Jockey Club was making its presence felt. The likelihood of war in 1739 had prompted Parliament's concern with the supply of military horses and the production of larger horses that could carry heavy weights; Parliament forced racehorses to carry more weight than in the past, thereby encouraging the breeding of large horses. At the same time, Parliament eradicated the numerous smaller race meetings where it was believed that working people wasted time and money, by banning races of less than £50 prize value. In Yorkshire, there was a reduction from 56 days of racing at 22 courses in 1739, to only 12 days racing at six courses by 1741. The 1740 Act was partly repealed in 1745, when it was seen that there was a plentiful supply of cavalry horses, and that the number of race meetings remained low. There was never any attempt to prevent, or control gambling on horse races, probably because many MPs were racehorse owners and wanted no interference in their activities. The government raised an insignificant tax on racehorses in 1784.

The sport was a highly organised activity that with the exception of the Royal Plates and endowed races, required crowds of spectators who indirectly paid for its existence. The race organisers had to find a prize to attract the competitors. The donors of the prizes, called the founders, could have several motives for their generosity. The Crown donated some of the most valuable prizes to encourage breeders to produce strong horses, whilst some gentlemen gave smaller sums to local races, to provide sport for a town, or their friends. The Kiplingcotes endowed race was set up by some gentlemen as a permanent event which anyone could enter.

¹ Cook Appendix

Other prizes were given by groups of tradesmen, or civic bodies, for less altruistic, although honest purposes, to encourage trade for themselves from the spectators and competitors. A less honest, though acceptable source at this time, was politically motivated, when the MPs and prospective MPs provided race prizes as sweeteners to the electors. Matches and sweepstakes were self-financed, because the prizes were put up by the competitors themselves. The winners of some races were forced to contribute to the following year's prize by the rules of the race; this was outlawed by Parliament in 1740. A prize was usually provided for the second horse from the stakes that the competitors paid to enter the race. In order to prevent all methods of cheating and the best return for the donors' money, an individual and detailed set of rules, or race articles were drawn up by the organisers of each meeting. The organisers also selected the dates when the races should be run.

A race meeting's success depended mainly upon its prizes that were usually reliant upon its ability to attract spectators, consequently the times when the largest number would be likely to attend were chosen. The weather was of basic importance, as people would not attend in bad weather, and it was dangerous for horses to race in icy or boggy conditions. Races that required no public finance, like the Royal Plates and the Kiplingcotes race, could be run at any time, but commercially sponsored races needed crowds, such as might be found at regional fairs. Some days of the week were more popular for race days, particularly in the middle of the week at the minor courses. Saturday was pay day for working people, when they had to go to work, and Mondays were not commonly popular for racing, perhaps because the inns who sponsored races had no need to attract extra trade, as 'Saint Monday' already drew customers for them. The major meetings at York often covered a whole week, except for Sundays, which were not normally race days anywhere, resulting in the days being spread across the week here. A harmonious community effort was required by the innkeepers and tradespeople to organise a successful race meeting, and the best, at York, was also supported by the enterprising City Corporation.

The established holiday times, on traditional saint's days and other Christian festivals, were very popular with racegoers; 87% of race days coincided with a fair or religious holiday. Many of these days also coincided with slack periods in the agricultural calendar, like Michaelmas, that occurred at the end of the farming year, and was a regular race time. The various types of farming, with different slack times, allowed races to be held at diverse dates, and races were never found at two places in the same district at the same time. It was, however, very common to find that races were held in conjunction with another social activity like a fair, but not a market. There would have been trade for the town already on market day, and like Mondays, it was unnecessary to attract more, but many fairs were in decline, and races may have attracted more customers. Few race meetings were held in early August, except for the prestigious York races that were deliberately planned to follow the Assizes, and encouraged the numerous rich

visitors to stay longer, and spend more money. The other legal proceedings that many gentlemen were obliged to attend, were the Quarter Sessions, but no association with racing has been found here. The gentlemen attending the quarter sessions used the local inns for all their needs, and as their business was conducted during the day, there was no need for the innkeepers to provide racing to entertain them, although evening entertainment was arranged.

Over two thirds of Yorkshire race meetings lasted for only one or two days. These were usually at the minor courses, or at Hambleton, but the York meetings were regularly able to continue for up to a week. Only 19 out of the 51 places that held horse races were able to support a three-day or longer meeting. Three main factors were necessary to hold a profitable race meeting, i.e. crowds of spectators with money to spend, the infrastructure of the district, and the support of other leisure facilities. Areas with these features were able to hold long race meetings. Some quite small places managed to hold long meetings, particularly if they were situated on, or close by, a main route, or bridge, or a populous town which had the advantage of a ready-made crowd of spectators. Market towns were the sites for more than two thirds of race meetings, but not on the designated market day. Races were regularly arranged to coincide with annual fairs for at least one third of Yorkshire meetings. Some large towns had no races, or just short meetings; although the potential spectators were there, the other factors required to make a successful event were absent. Relatively large towns in remote areas without good roads, had difficulty in getting the horses to the courses, and a lack of additional entertainment facilities meant that other smaller towns nearby that could offer these, were also able to hold the race meetings. The most successful race towns all had several features to underpin their races, including plenty of accommodation for humans and horses, and they either already had, or quickly set about, providing entertainment for the visitors, including assemblies, feasts and cockfights, finding that the new leisure industry was a good year round source of trade and revenue. The Yorkshire spa towns of Scarborough and Knaresborough held race meetings as an extra attraction for their summer visitors, although the latter was only a small place.

Horse racing was a high status sport; it attracted over 700 racehorse owners to enter events in Yorkshire between 1727-1749. It was an expensive undertaking, and most people who tried it gave up after one race, but many raced regularly over several years. Most of the identified owners were from Yorkshire, and they often supported the minor courses near their homes, as well as the larger meetings, but owners from all over Britain sent their horses to Yorkshire race meetings, even though travelling was difficult. The non-Yorkshire owners, who included some of the most wealthy and successful racing men, were mainly from neighbouring areas, whereas only twenty or so came from southern England, and six were from Scotland. North Yorkshire, between York and Richmond, was the premier breeding country for racehorses; most of the best breeding lines originated in the stables of the gentry and farmers of this area. One of the most prominent North Riding breeders was Cuthbert Routh, whose studbook shows that he

made a well-deserved profit. He appears to have been an honest man who dealt in a straightforward way, and personally supervised the breeding and training of his animals. A horse's pedigree was an important factor in its valuation, and careful notes were always kept in this respect. When training his horses, Routh compared going conditions and weights carried, with the actual times that the horses ran, both in secret dawn trials, and in actual races. The times of both races and trials quoted by Routh prove that eighteenth century horses did not run slow waiting races with a quick dash at the finish as has been suggested by Fairfax Blakeborough, but that they ran at a very fast pace, especially considering the weight they carried, the number of heats run, and the long distances they ran. When he sold horses, he sometimes took a chance on their future winnings by accepting a low price and a portion of their first win. Another contemporary studbook, belonging to the Duke of Ancaster, shows that some owners employed servants to oversee the training of their horses, and that timing the horses running, was not carried out universally. The limited amount of information on professional jockeys and trainers suggests that these men were not highly regarded at this time, but also that jockeys were free agents who did not ride for just one owner. Gentlemen rode in the occasional races, especially designated for them, but they were not found in the rougher events where professionals rode. Race organisers were able to ban from their events, any riders or owners whom they believed were guilty of cheating, and did so on a few occasions.

The people who owned racehorses did so, either for pleasure, prestige, or profit. Those owners who have been identified ranged from the outstandingly wealthy courtiers and industrialists, to farmers and parsons. Most owners cannot be identified, probably because they were relatively insignificant, both socially and financially, but this shows that the majority of entries were by anonymous middling people who did not win. Horses were occasionally entered in women's names, but with the exception of Queen Anne, these horses were probably owned by male relatives. Some of the most powerful and wealthy people were actively involved in racing, including Members of both Houses of Parliament, salaried public officials, holders of sinecures in the Royal Household, and Lord Lieutenants and High Sheriffs; only judges and bishops were conspicuously absent from racing. The numbers of wealthy professional men increased significantly in the eighteenth century, and many lawyers, physicians, soldiers, and clergymen were among the racehorse owners, as were men of all the main political and religious groups.

Widely regarded as the sport of kings, racing, almost three centuries ago, could perhaps better be described as the sport of the people, since it provided work and entertainment, serving much the same purpose as today as part of the leisure industry. It was much more widespread then, with at least 51 courses in Yorkshire alone. Most have now disappeared, with names long forgotten, although a few are still discernible in the rural landscape, the occasional trophy in a museum case, their only tangible legacy.

APPENDIX 1

KIPLINGCOTES ARTICLES 1619¹

Articles to be observed and kept by those that run for the Prize at the ancient course at Kipling Coates, within the East Riding of the county of York, and which shall be yearly rid the third Thursday in March.

1st: Every man that is a Founder he is to put Twenty shillings in Gold for his stake when he hath a horse, gelding or mare that runs for the prize, and every other person Four Pounds in Gold, and if any person that is a founder put in a horse that is not his own, he must put in Four Pounds in Gold for his stake or be adjudged not to run for the prize.

2ndly: Every horse, gelding or mare that runneth for the prize shall be led out between twelve and one of the clock, and shall run the course before two of the clock in the afternoon.

3rdly: Every horse, etc., that runneth for the Prize shall start bridled and saddled and shall run with the rider weighing 10 st., fourteen pounds to the stone, according to ancient custom.

4thly: Every horse, etc., that runneth for the prize shall have their Judge or Trier, and put their stakes into the clerk's hand at or before eleven of the clock, who will be at the winning post ready to receive it, and set down the name of the owner of every horse, etc., his horse's name and colour, and his rider's name and Judge's name, and to take a record from the Judge of every horse's place at the end of the course.

5thly: Whosoever doth stop or stay any of the running horses that rideth for this prize, if he be either the owner of a horse that runs or his servant will be adjudged to hinder the horse, his horse shall win no prize.

6thly: Every rider that layeth hold of any of the other riders or striketh any of them shall win no prize.

7thly: Every rider that wanteth any more than one pound of his weight after he has run shall win no prize.

¹ The date is probably incorrect and should read 1669. S. Neave, 'Kiplingcotes – the oldest horse race in England: fact or fiction?' EYJHS The Bulletin 46 1992 pp 12-15

8thly: That the horse that runneth first by the Weighing Post set up at the end of the course observing the articles shall win the Prize, and the second horse, etc., shall have the stakes, only so much yearly detained and taken out of the stakes as shall finish, support, repair and maintain the Rubbing Houses at the end of the course, and what be deemed necessary to be done about the said course in maintaining the weights, posts, and levelling the ground etc., and any two or more of the Founders are authorised to direct and appoint yearly how much of the stakes shall be detained or taken out for the uses aforesaid.

9thly: George Plaxton of Londesborough, is declared to to be clerk and to keep the weights, and is to receive fifteen shillings from him that winneth the Prize, that is ten shillings for keeping the weights and five shillings which he is to employ for mending the course every year, and likewise to receive twelve pence for every Trier's name that he enters in his book, and he is to appoint a man to start the horses, to whom the Master of the winning horse is to pay two shillings and six pence, and he is to take care that there be not any horse, etc., do start within a quarter of a mile of the running horses, and the said Trustees or the major part of them is hereby declared from time to time to nominate and appoint who shall be their clerk at their will and pleasure.

10thly: All the Posts on the course to be left on the right hand, otherwise he shall win no Prize.

11thly: Every man that is a Founder and his heir's male are hereby declared to be Founders to this course for ever, and that the eldest son of every Founder shall have the privilege of putting in a horse as a Founder during his father's life, and that the names of every Founder be fairly written on parchment to be remain constantly with the clerk, and likewise on the same parchment to be set down in whose custody the writing or security shall remain which is taken for any part of the sums of money so contributed.

12thly: The master of those horses that run wherein there shall happen any difference, shall each of them name one Founder to determine this difference, and if they cannot agree, those two Founders are to name an Umpire.

13thly: Any of the riders being required by any of the Triers or Judges shall be weighed after the course, and in case of refusal or want of weight according to the Articles, shall be adjudged the last horse.

14thly: That if any horse, etc., be brought to run under the name of a Founder and that there be any suspicion by any person that such a Founder is not really the owner of such a horse, etc., and the said suspicion be declared to the clerk of the course, he is directed to acquaint the

Judge or Trier of such horse, etc., and such Founder, if he be on the course, is forthwith upon notice to repair to the said clerk, and engage to the Trier upon his honour that such horse, etc., is really his own without any matter of equivocation, fraudulence, or deceit; or if such Founder be not upon the course himself, then some other Gentleman on his behalf is to clear the doubt in the same manner as aforesaid, and if there be no such clearing of the aforesaid doubt, then such Founder is either to put in Four Pounds towards the increase of the stakes or else to be adjudged not to be in a capacity to win the Plate but shall be adjudged the last horse.

These are the articles agreed upon by us who are Trustees for the Horse Course at Kibling Coates, to which we subscribe, MDXIX

J. Fairfax Blakeborough Northern turf history vol. 2 pp 141-143

MALTON ARTICLES 1713

Articles agreed by the founders for a plate to be run for on Langton Wolds, near New Malton, on Thursday, the 1st day of October next:

1. Every horse that runs to carry 10st. weight besides saddle and bridle.
2. That any horse that wins two heats and saves his distance the third shall have the plate. And if three horses win each of them one heat, then those three horses are only to run in the fourth heat:and the horse that wins that heat shall have the plate.
3. That every person that enters a horse shall subscribe or bring an authority from his master to subscribe that he will abide and be determined by these articles.
4. That unless three or more horses run, the plate shall not be run for.
5. That every founder that enters a horse for this plate shall pay over and above his subscription one guinea, and all other fower guineas apiece.
6. Every rider shall leave the posts on the right or left-hand according to the original articles of this course.
7. That every person that enters a horse shall name the rider and three tryers.
8. That it shall be lawful to change any rider that is by accident disabled in any heat, provided the weight be carried according to the articles.
9. That every horse that runs shall be entered on Saturday, the 28th day of this instant September, at Mr. John Dunns, New Malton, and every person that enters shall pay 5/- for entering.
10. That every horse shall be ready to start between the hours of two and three in the afternoon on the day appointed to run, and shall have halfe an hour allowed for rubbing after every heat; and no horse shall start before notice of the clarke.
11. That if any difference shall arise upon account of this plate, it shall be referred to Sir William Strickland, Bt., or , in his absence, to the majority of the founders then present, who hereby have power to determine the same.

Signed: Will Strickland, Hugh Cholmley, W. Strickland, Jn.

J.Fairfax Blakeborough Northern turf history vol 2 pp 163-164

MIDDLEHAM ARTICLES 1762

Every horse mare or gelding that starts for the first of the said plates, called the Town Plate, shall carry the weight and pay for entrance as in the advertisement.

To start at one of the clock, At a place at the bottom of the Cross Bank set out for that purpose and to run the new course twice round, and on the top of the Cross Bank on the same side they start at, to posts set up for that purpose, and in running to leave all the posts on the left hand.

Each subscriber to pay three guineas and a non-subscriber four guineas towards the next year's diversion, and five shillings entrance to the Clerk of the Race.

The owners of the winning horses to pay towards expenses of dining, flags etc.

J.Fairfax Blakeborough Northern turf history vol 2 pp 167-168

NEWMARKET ARTICLES 1665

Articles for the twelve stone plate at Newmarket instituted by King Charles II in 1665

Imp. That every horse, mare or gelding that rideth for this prize shalbe led out between eleven and twelve of the clock in the forenoon, and shalbe ready to start by one of the same day.

Item Evry horse that rideth shalbe bridled, saddled, and shod, and his rider shall weigh twelve stone, fourteen pounds to the stone; and evry rider that wanteth above one pound and a halfe after he hath rid the heat, shall win no plate or prize.

Item Evry horse that rides the new Round Course three times over (set out the 16th day of October in the 17th year of King Charles II) on the outside of the Ditch from Newmarket, shall leave all the posts and flags the first and last heats on the right hand, and the second on the left hand, starting and ending at the weighing post, by Cambridge Gap, called Thomond's Post.

Item Whatsoever horse rideth willingly or for advantage, within any of the said flags, shall win no plate or prize, but lose his stakes and ride no more; but if he be thrust by any horse against his will, then he shall lose only the heat; provided he keeps all the rest of the flags, and come within distance.

Item It is allowed for any horse to be relieved at the discrec'on of the owner at the end of each heat, and evry horse shall have half an hour's time to rub between each heat.

Item Whosoever doth stop or stay any of the horses that rideth for this plate or prize, if he be either owner, party, or bettor, and it appears to be willingly done, he shall win no plate, prize, or bets.

Item Evry rider that layeth hold on, or striketh any of the riders, shall win no plate or prize.

Item If any horse mare or gelding shall fall by any mischance, so that the rider be dismounted, and if he does his best afterwards to get within distance, and ride fair (which shall be determined by the Judges of the Field) he shall only lose the heat.

Item Any of the Judges may weigh any of the riders at the end of any of the heats; and if he be found to have fraudulently cast away any of his weight, and want any more than his pound and a halfe, he shall lose the plate, prize, and stakes.

Item If any difference shalbe about riding for this plate, which is not expressed in these articles, it shalbe referred to the noblemen and gentlemen which are then present, and being contributors to the said plate; but more especially the Judges, the Judge being to be chosen every time the plate or prize is run for, by the major part of the contributors that are there present.

Item Evry horse that that winneth three heats shall win the plate or prize without running the course.

Item Evry horse that runneth for the plate or prize shall put in three pounds, except it be a contributor's horse then he shall put in forty shillings.

Item Whosever winneth the plate or prize shall give to the Clerk of the Course twenty shillings to be distributed to the poor on both sides of Newmarket, and twenty shillings to the Clerk of the Race: for which he is to keep the course plain and free from cart roots.

Item The Clerk of the Race is to receive the stakes before any horse starts, and is to deliver it to the tenant for the time being, who is to give sufficient security, not only for his rent, but likewise such stakes to the ensuing plate or prize the next year.

Item Evry horse mare or gelding that rideth for this plate or prize, shall likewise deposit twenty shillings for every heat, which the winning horse shall have; and the last horse of every heat pay the second horse's stakes and his own which stakes are likewise to be deposited into the clerk of the Race's hands before the horses start, to pay the winning horse his stakes every heat, likewise twenty shillings to the second horse, to save his stakes: but if there runneth two horses, then no stakes to be run for but what is to add to the next year's plate.

Item No horse that winneth not one of the heats shalbe permitted to come in and run the course.

Item The plate or prize is to be run for the second Thursday in October, every rider carrying twelve stone weight at fourteen pounds to the stone besides bridle and saddle: and if any gentleman rides shall carry weight in his saddle, he shall have liberty, provided he allows two pounds to the rest for the weight of their saddles.

Item The Clerk of the Races is to summon the riders to start again at the end of half an hour by the signal of a drum, trumpet, or any other way, setting up an hourglass for that purpose.

Item No man is permitted to ride for this prize that is either a serving man or groom.

Item That horses that after the running of the three heats shall run the four mile course, shall lead away and start within half an hour or else to win the prize.

T.A.Cook A history of the English turf appendix

APPENDIX 2

A GAZETTEER OF RACES IN YORKSHIRE 1700-1749

Evidence has been found to show that races were held at the following places in the years stated; races may also have taken place in other years. Sources: York Courant, London Gazette, Leeds Mercury, J.Cheny Racing Calendars 1727-1749, J.Orton Turf annals of York and Doncaster, C.Weatherby The racing calendar abridged.

Adwalton	1738-1739
Arthington	1726-1730
Askrigg	1738-1739
Bamsley	1709, 1717-1718, 1730-1732, 1738-1739, 1748
Bedale	1726-1728, 1730-1732, 1734-1735, 1737-1739
Beverley	1712, 1714, 1727, 1730-1740, 1742-1749
Birstall	1730
Bishop Burton	1738-1740
Boroughbridge	1731-1733, 1735, 1737-1739
Bradford	1729, 1731
Bramham Moor	1700, 1702, 1705, 1708, 1712, 1731, 1737
Bridlington	1730-1732
Caulkley	1708
Chapel Allerton	1708-1711, 1714, 1723, 1725, 1727, 1729-1731, 1732-1738
Coolham-Dale	1731

Doncaster	1700-1701, 1703-1705, 1707, 1709-1712, 1716-1717, 1727-1746
Fremington	1732, 1735, 1739-1740
Gatherley Moor	1704, 1709, 1737-1741
Halifax	1737-1740
Hambleton	1705, 1708-1724, 1726-1746, 1748-1749
Hedon	1738
Helmsley	1732
Hunmanby	1728-1733, 1735, 1737
Kalesdown	1706
Kiplingcotes	1702, 1707, 1710, 1720, 1727-1745, 1747, 1749
Knaresborough	1730-1733, 1735-1738
Leyburn	1701, 1728, 1731
Leeming	1748
Methley	1714, 1723, 1725, 1729-1731, 1738
Middleham	1704-1711, 1713-1716, 1726-1727, 1729-1732, 1737-1739
New Malton	1707, 1710, 1713, 1727, 1730-1735, 1737-1749
Otley	1729-1730
Penistone	1726-1728, 1730
Pocklington	1748

Pontefract	1703, 1725-1727, 1730-1732, 1735, 1737-1740
Pudsey	1730
Richmond	1706, 1709, 1713, 1724-1732, 1747-1749
Ripon	1721-1725, 1727, 1732, 1748-1749
Rotherham	1726-1727, 1729, 1731-1732, 1735, 1737-1740
Scarborough	1727-1729
Selby	1727, 1730-1732, 1737-1739, 1748
Settrington	1732
Sheffield	1708, 1711, 1713, 1737-1738
Stapleton Leys	1703, 1710
Tadcaster	1738
Temple Newsam	1725, 1727
Thirsk	1739
Wakefield	1717, 1726-1728, 1730-1735, 1737-1745, 1747-1749
Wetherby	1748
Yarm	1724, 1727, 1729-1732, 1737-1739, 1749
York	1709-1749

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Hull City Archive Office
CQB Calendar of Quarter Sessions Books 1650-1775

Hull University Library Archives
DDCV Documents deposited by Crust, Todd & Mills
DDHO Documents of the Hotham family of South Dalton
DDSY Documents of the Sykes family of Sledmere

Leeds City Record Office
GC Documents of the Gascoigne family of Barnbow

North Yorkshire County Record Office
DC/RMB Documents of Richmond Races

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